1493. i. 3.

SUBSTANCE

OF

LORD MORNINGTON's

SPEECH

WELLESLEY (R.C.) Marquis
Wellesley

IN THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

ON TUESDAY, JANUARY 21, 1794,

ON A MOTION FOR

AN ADDRESS TO HIS MAJESTY

AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE

SESSIONS OF PARLIAMENT.

DUBLIN:

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30
61
MAY

THE

SPEECH, &c.

MR. SPEAKER,

IF the preſent conjuncture of our affairs afforded us a free option between war and peace; if the neceſſity which originally compelled us to engage in the preſent conteſt had ceaſed, and the queſtion for our deliberation on this day were merely, whether we ſhould return to the ſecure and uninterrupted enjoyment of a flouriſhing commerce, of an overflowing revenue, of tranquil liberty at home, and of reſpect and honour abroad; or whether, on the other hand, we ſhould wantonly commit to the doubtful chance of arms all thoſe accumulated bleſſings; no man could heſitate one moment in deciding on ſuch an alternative. To us more eſpecially no other guide would be neceſſary than our own recent experience. Within our own memory, the country has paſſed with ſuch rapid ſteps from the loweſt ſtate of adverſity to the utmoſt degree of opulence, ſplendor, and power, that all our minds muſt be furniſhed with whatever uſeful leſſons are to be drawn from either fortune. We all know, and have felt what may be loſt by the calamities of war, and

what may be gained by a wiſe improvement of the advantages of peace. But whether I revert to the grounds and origin of this war, whether I look forward to the probable iſſue of the conteſt, or fix my attention on the inevitable effects of any attempt to abandon it in the preſent criſis, my judgment is driven to the painful, but irreſiſtible concluſion, that no ſuch alternative is now before us. Our choice muſt now be made between the vigorous proſecution of our preſent exertions, and an ambiguous ſtate neither of open hoſtility, nor of real repoſe; a ſtate in which we ſhould ſuffer moſt of the inconveniencies of war, in which we ſhould enjoy none of the ſolid advantages of peace, in which, even if we could purchaſe at the expence of our honour and of our faith a ſhort reſpit from the direct attacks of the enemy, we could never for a moment feel the genuine ſenſe of permanent ſecurity; unleſs we could contemplate without emotion the rapid progreſs of the arms and principles of France in the territories of our allies; unleſs we could behold without anxiety the rapid approaches of the ſame danger threatening the Britiſh dominions; unleſs we could ſit at eaſe with the axe ſuſpended over our heads, and wait with tranquillity of mind the moment, when theſe formidable enemies, after the extinction of every element of order and regular government in their own country, after the ſubjugation of every foreign power whoſe alliance might aſſiſt us in our laſt ſtruggles, ſtrengthened by additional reſources, animated by the proſpect of new plunder, and flushed with the triumphant ſucceſs of their proſperous crimes, ſhould turn their whole force againſt the Britiſh Monarchy, and complete their victory over the intereſts of civil ſociety, by the final deſtruction of that fair fabric of government, under which theſe happy kingdoms have ſo long enjoyed the inſeparable advantages of ſubſtantial liberty, ſettled order, and eſtabliſhed law.

No part of the ſpeech from the throne more fully meets my ſentiments on this important queſtion, than that in which his Majeſty recommends it to us to bear in mind the true grounds and origin of the preſent war. We cannot have forgotten, that before the French had declared war againſt us, we had ſeen in their conduct views of aggrandizement, projects of ambition, and principles of fixed hoſtility againſt all eſtabliſhed government: and we had been convinced, that unleſs the foundation of our complaints ſhould be removed by a total alteration in their ſyſtem with reſpect to foreign nations, war on our part would become at length inevitable. We cannot have forgotten, that inſtead of endeavouring to remove our juſt apprehenſions, their explanations afforded freſh motives of jealouſy, and their conduct aggravated every cauſe of offence; until at length, they interrupted all negociation by a ſudden declaration of war, attended by circumſtances of unexampled perfidity and violence. At that time we declared at the foot of the throne, "that we conſidered whatever his Ma-"jeſty's ſubjects held moſt dear and ſacred, the ſtability "of our happy conſtitution, the ſecurity and honour of "his Majeſty's Crown, and the preſervation of our "laws, our liberty, and our religion, to be all involv-"ed in the iſſue of the preſent conteſt, and we pledg-"ed ourſelves, that our zeal and exertions ſhould be "proportioned to the importance of the conjuncture, "and to the magnitude and value of the objects for "which we had to contend." Impreſſions conceived after ſuch deliberate examination, aſſurances ſo ſolemnly pledged in the face of the nation, and of all Europe, will not be abandoned by the wiſdom and firmneſs of this houſe upon ſuch ſuggeſtions as have hitherto been offered in this debate—Before we can be juſtified in relinquiſhing the principles by which our proceedings have hitherto been governed, we ſhall require

require ſatisfactory proof, either that the impreſſions which we had originally conceived of the views of France were erroneous; or, that by the courſe of ſubſequent events the ſucceſs of the war is become deſperate and impracticable; or, that from ſome improvement in the ſyſtem and principles which prevail in France, and in the views and characters of thoſe who now exerciſe the powers of government there, the motives of juſtice and neceſſity which compelled us to enter into the war, no longer continue to operate.

On each of theſe propoſitions ſeparately, and on the combined reſult of the whole, I ſhall endeavour to bring this queſtion to a fair iſſue.

Although the queſtion of the original juſtice and neceſſity of the war was ſo fully examined in the laſt ſeſſion of parliament, yet to relinquiſh the bleſſings of peace is a meaſure of ſuch ſerious and grave importance, that I am confident we ſhall not be unwilling, during any period of the conteſt, carefully and anxiouſly to reviſe the grounds on which it was adopted. In the preſent moment, however ſuperfluous it may appear to ſearch for any additional juſtification of our conduct, or to endeavour to throw any new light on a queſtion already ſo well underſtood, yet it cannot but prove ſatisfactory to us, that a variety of occurrences ſince the commencement of the war, and many new and ſtriking proofs have concurred to confirm the wiſdom and juſtice of our deciſion, not merely on general grounds, but preciſely on the very grounds on which it was originally founded. If I could bring to your bar the moſt malignant, the moſt active, and the moſt able enemy of the Britiſh name in the National Convention, the author of the moſt ſcandalous official libels againſt the views, intereſts, and power of Great Britain, the author of the moſt inflammatory ſpeeches tending to provoke the war in

which

which we are engaged, the author of the declaration of war itſelf, and the inventor of all the pretences by which it has ſince been palliated both in France, and in England; if I could bring him to a croſs examination in your preſence, confront him with his own reports, ſpeeches, and manifeſtoes, as well as with thoſe of his colleagues in office, and comparing the reſult of the whole, with concurrent and ſubſequent events, convict him and his aſſociates of falſehood, treachery, and prevarication in all their pretended explanations, of their own deſigns, as well as in all their affected complaints of the ſuppoſed views of his Majeſty's Councils, I am perſuaded that you would not reject an inveſtigation, the iſſue of which muſt tend to confirm the confidence of the nation in the original juſtice of our cauſe: ſuch is the nature of the proof which I am about to offer to you.

Briſſot, the leader of the Diplomatic Committee, Briſſot, the main ſpring of the French Government, at the breaking out of the war falling into diſgrace and danger, addreſſed to his Conſtituents a defence of all his meaſures, in which he reveals the whole ſecret and myſtery of the French Revolution, and makes an open confeſſion of the principles by which France was directed in her intercourſe with the other powers, of the means which ſhe employed, and of the ends which ſhe purſued. From the unqueſtionable teſtimony of this production, from the evidence of the principal actor in theſe tranſactions, I propoſe to examine the truth of our complaints, the juſtice of the conduct of France, and the validity of the arguments which have been uſed on either ſide.

The views which we attributed to France previous to the war, were views of aggrandizement and ambition, connected with the propagation of principles, incompatible with the exiſtence of any regular government.

The

The particular acts by which those views had been manifested, were, 1st, the decree of the 19th of November, in which France made (according to her own language) a grant of universal fraternity and assistance, and ordered her generals every where to aid and abet those citizens who had suffered, or might suffer hereafter in the cause of (what she called) liberty. Her sense of liberty, as applied to England, was shewn by the reception of seditious and treasonable addresses, and by the speeches of the president of the National Convention, expressing his wish for the auspicious Institution of a British Convention, founded, as such an institution must have been, upon the destruction of every branch of our happy constitution.

2d. The conduct of France, in incorporating the territories of other powers with her own, under colour of voluntary acts of Union, pretended to have been freely voted by the people; particularly in the cases of Savoy, and of the Netherlands, of both which countries France had assumed the sovereignty.

3d. The opening of the Scheldt, in direct violation of the most solemn treaties guaranteed by France herself. And lastly, her general design of hostility against Holland.

When the decree of the 19th of November was complained of here, the Executive Council replied, that, "It would be injurous to the National Convention, to charge them with the project of protecting insurrections."

Brissot, in his confessions, is pleased to admit, that, "the decree of the 19th of November was absurd and "impolitic, and justly excited uneasiness in foreign "cabinets." You shall now hear the wise, politic, and conciliatory exposition of the principles of France, which he opposes to that decree. "What was the "opinion of enlightened men, of men who were "republicans

" Republicans before the 10th of Auguſt, who de-
" ſired Liberty, not only for their own country, but
" for all Europe? They thought that liberty might
" be eſtabliſhed every where, by exciting * thoſe for
" whom government is adminiſtered againſt thoſe
" who adminiſter it, and by proving to the people
" the facility and advantages of ſuch inſurrections."
This theory of univerſal liberty founded upon univer-
ſal inſurrection, this ſyſtem of exciting the people
againſt all regular government of whatever form,
againſt all authority of whatever deſcription, this plan
for the inſtruction of the mob in the advantages of
diſorder, and in the facility of outrage and plunder, is
deliberately applauded by Briſſot, as the eſtabliſhed
doctrine of the moſt moderate men in France, to
which no one could object on account of its abſurdity
or impolicy, or of its tendency to excite uneaſineſs
in foreign cabinets.

You may perceive that the authors of the decree of
the 19th of November, and the *enlightened Repub-
licans* of whom Briſſot ſpeaks, were equally animated
by the great principle of *deſiring liberty* (as they are
pleaſed to ſtile it) *for all Europe*; their only difference
conſiſted in the mode of carrying their common views
into ſpeedy and effectual execution. This will appear
more clearly in the paſſages which I ſhall now read to
the Houſe: "but how can the people be led to that
" point? By zealous efforts to ſpread the ſpirit of
" liberty among them. This ſyſtem was purſued at
" firſt. Excellent pamphlets from the pen of Con-
" dorcet had prepared all people for liberty. The
" underſtandings of the Belgians ought to have been
" enlightened by good writings, we ought to have
" ſent miſſionaries among them." The Houſe will
find no difficulty in underſtanding what is meant by
good *writings* (I ſay nothing of *miſſionaries*) when

* Les Adminiſtrés contre les Adminiſtrans.

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the *letters of Condorcet* are quoted as models of perfection. We are not unacquainted with the ſtile of thoſe "excellent pamphlets from the pen of Con-" dorcet, by which all people were to be prepared for " liberty." We cannot be ſo ungrateful as to have forgotten the delicacy with which he ſuggeſted to the people of England, "that the French Revolution was " an object both of their fears and deſires, that a Par-" liamentary Reform would be propoſed in this " Houſe, and that from thence the paſſage to the " complete eſtabliſhment of a Republic would be " ſhort and eaſy." Such are the means, ſo reconcileable with the faith of nations, ſo compatible with the amicable intercourſe to be maintained with foreign powers, which Briſſot, the reporter of the Diplomatic Committee, propoſed to employ for the introduction of the principles of univerſal confuſion into the boſom of every independent ſtate. The diſappointment of theſe benevolent views, and the failure of this great deſign, are lamented by him in terms ſo forcible, and ſo pathetic, as to diſplay at once the ſtupendous magnitude of this ſcheme of deſtruction, and the frantic zeal with which it was purſued. " Oh! how grievous it is! for a man who has ſeen " the Revolution advanced to a degree, to which, " four years ago, it would, perhaps, have been " madneſs to have thought of carrying it; how " grievous it is! to ſee that Revolution falling back, " while every thing was contending in its favour! " Shall then all the benefit of our experience be loſt " to the general cauſe of liberty, to other nations, " and to future Rovolutions? Tears of blood ſhould " flow from the eyes of all Republicans; liberty, " which might ſo eaſily have been extended, until it " ſhould have known no other bounds than thoſe of " the world, muſt now ſubmit to a doleful confine-" ment within the limits of France."

Some

Some doubt might, perhaps, have been thrown upon the authority of the evidence which I have produced to the Houſe, if it had appeared to attribute to the Government of France principles incompatible with their general ſyſtem, and not conformable to the conduct of their agents and miniſters in the different foreign countries; but when we find, that the public acts and language of all the agents of France correſpond with the deſigns here aſcribed to their employers, this circumſtance at once corroborates the teſtimony to which I have alluded, and exhibits in itſelf a ſtriking inſtance of the uniformity and conſiſtency of the ſyſtem in all its parts.

In America (a Government which, I am perſuaded, the noble Earl * who has ſpoken in this debate, will concur with me in thinking, does not require to be improved by any infuſion of French principles) Citizen Genet was appointed Reſident by Briſſot and Le Brun: he there commenced his operations by the inſtitution of a Jacobin Club; he publicly inſulted the magiſtrates; diſputed the acts of Government; opened what he was pleaſed to call a conſular tribunal under the authority of the French Republic, for the condemnation of prizes within the territory of America; enforced the execution of its ſentences by acts of open violence; and at length, the powers and privileges of the Conſul acting under his orders having been annulled by the Preſident of the United States, and his proceedings having been checked, as being contrary to the law of nations, and to the rules by which the relations of independent ſtates are governed, citizen Genet preſents a remonſtrance to the Secretary of State, in which he gravely ſays, "that he "does not recollect what the worm-eaten writings of "Grotius, Puffendorff, and Vatell ſay on theſe ſub-

* Lord Wycombe

" jects; he thanks God he has forgotten what thoſe
" hireling Civilians have written on the rights of na-
" tions, in times of univerſal ſlavery; but he knows
" that his conduct has been agreeable to the ſpirit of
" the French Conſtitution, of the American Conſti-
" tution, and of the rights of man, which are for ever
" engraven on his heart, and from which he learns,
" that an appeal muſt lie from the Preſident, who is a
" mere miniſterial officer, to the Sovereign people of
" America.

Thus this diſciple of Briſſot takes upon himſelf to ſuperſede every maxim of the law of nations by doctrines drawn from the conſtitution of France; and not content with that outrage, he arrogates to himſelf the right of interpreting the Conſtitution of America by reference to the ſame polluted ſource, and affects to depoſe the Preſident of the United States from his Conſtitutional authority, under colour of the ſacred rights of man, and of the undefeaſible ſovereignty of the people.

Citizen Deſcorches employed by the ſame party at Conſtantinople, proceeded in the ſame ſpirit; he eſtabliſhed Jacobin Clubs, and held primary aſſemblies for the propagation of the true faith of liberty among the Janiſaries at the Porte. Thus from Mr. Jefferſon to the Reis Effendi, from the Preſident of the United States of America to the Grand Seignior, from the Congreſs to the Divan, from the popular form of a Republic to the moſt unmixt military deſpotiſm, every mode and gradation of lawful authority, or of eſtabliſhed power was the object of deliberate, ſyſtematic, and uniform attack. There is another feature of this project which I cannot omit, becauſe it ſo nearly concerns the ſecurity of ſome of the moſt valuable poſſeſſions of the Britiſh Empire. We are told by Robeſpierre, that a part of the general ſcheme of Briſſot and his aſſociates was to free and

arm

arm all the Negroes in the French Colonies in the Weſt Indies. Briſſot, inſtead of attempting to refute this charge, takes merit to himſelf for the ingenuity and ſimplicity of the invention; he ſays, that "by the ſimple operation of purifying the Colonial ſyſtem of the French Iſlands, he would have accompliſhed the deſtruction of all the Britiſh Colonies in the Weſt Indies." He adds, "That this is a ſecret of which few have any idea." Thoſe who have given their attention more particularly to the caſe of the African Negroes, will be the firſt to feel the complicated horror of this deteſtable project of maſſacre and deſolation. An abrupt emancipation of the ſlaves in the Weſt Indies, accompanied with the circumſtances of putting arms into their hands, would inſtantly occaſion a ſcene of bloodſhed and miſery, which our imaginations could ſcarcely conceive, if it had not already been realized in the Iſland of St. Domingo under the auſpices of the commiſſioners appointed by Briſſot and his party. There cannot be a more ſtriking inſtance of the general tendency of the views of thoſe who governed France at the time of the declaration of war; it contains an epitome of that extenſive conſpiracy againſt the order of ſociety and the peace of mankind, which we have already conſidered in detail.

With this compendious example of the ruinous projects of thoſe who provoked the preſent war, I ſhall conclude this part of the argument, conceiving that I have ſhewn to the Houſe, that the miſchievous ſpirit of the decree of the 19th of Nov. denied by the Executive Council, has been avowed, acknowledged, and defended by Briſſot the champion of all their principles, and the author of all their plans; that his expoſition of this deſtructive ſpirit has been confirmed by a variety of concurrent circumſtances; and that the

arguments,

arguments, by which the difference of opinion between the contending parties in France with reſpect to the decree of the 19th of November has been maintained, ſerve only to prove more ſtrongly their unanimous agreement in the main principle of deſtruction, on which that decree was founded.

The principle of the incorporations, or re-unions of the different territories annexed to the dominions of France, (which is the next great feature of the ſyſtem by which we were menaced,) as well as the means employed to obtain thoſe re-unions, are fully explained by Briſſot. In examining this part of the ſubject, I beg to call the attention of the Houſe particularly to the groſs prevarications and contradictions of the author of the declaration of war, as well as to the ſhallow artifices employed by the Executive Council, in the hope of concealing the ambitious views of France from the eyes of Europe.

Firſt, with reſpect to Savoy and Nice. Briſſot, in a Report made to the National Convention, on the 12th of January, 1793, in the name of the Committee of General Safety, a report intended to prepare them for the approaching war, and profeſſing to contain a full and candid diſcuſſion of all the complaints of Great Britain, uſes theſe words, "The unanimous wiſh of all the communities of Savoy legitimates the union with that country." Thus writes Briſſot before the commencement of the war; obſerve how frankly and honeſtly he has ſince confeſſed the truth. "Cambon wanted to unite every thing, that he might ſell every thing; thus he FORCED the union of Savoy, and of Nice."

With regard to the Netherlands, Briſſot tells us in his confeſſions, that Cambon the French Miniſter of Finance forced that meaſure alſo with two views; the compulſory introduction of Aſſignats into that opulent country,

country, and the univerſal plunder of property: he introduces Cambon and his party reaſoning with the convention upon the manner of negociating an union with the free and ſovereign people of Belgium, in the following words: "The mortgage of our aſſignats "draws near its end: what muſt be done? Sell the "church property of Brabant; there is a mortgage "of two thouſand millions (eighty millions ſterling.) "How ſhall we get poſſeſſion of them? By an imme- "diate union! Men's minds are not diſpoſed to it. "What does that ſignify? Let us make them vote by "means of money. Without delay therefore they "ſecretly order the Miniſter of Foreign affairs to "diſpoſe of four or five hundred thouſand livres, "(20,000l. ſterling) to make the mob of Bruſſels "drunk, and to buy proſelytes to the principle of "union in all ſtates.

"But even theſe means, it was ſaid, will obtain "but a weak minority in our favour. What does "that ſignify? Revolutions, ſaid they, are made "only by minorities? It is the minority which has "made the Revolution of France."

Thus you ſee, that the union of theſe vaſt territories with all their immenſe population, wealth, and commerce, was conſidered by the French miniſter of Finance, as nothing more than a mere financial operation, for the purpoſe of ſupporting the ſinking credit of his aſſignats. The ſacred regard paid to the general will of the people in the doctrines reſpecting minorities, cannot have eſcaped the obſervation of the houſe. Something has been ſaid already of the means employed to obtain the free conſent of the people to theſe unions. On this ſubject we have full information from Briſſot. "Do you believe the Belgians "were ever impoſed upon by thoſe votes and re- "ſolutions made by what is called acclamation

"for

" for their union, for which corruption paid in part, " and fear forced the remainder? who at this time " of day is unacquainted with the ſprings and wires " of their miſerable puppet-ſhow? Who does not " know the farces of primary aſſemblies, compoſed " of a Preſident, of a Secretary, and of ſome aſſiſ- " tants, whoſe day-work was paid for? How could " they believe themſelves free and ſovereign when we " made them take ſuch an oath as we thought fit, as " a teſt to give them the right of voting?"

" What could the diſarmed Belgians object to all " this, ſurrounded as they were by ſeventy thouſand " men? They had only to hold their tongues, and " to bow down their heads before their maſters! " They did hold their tongues, and their ſilence is re- " ceived as a ſincere and free aſſent."

Briſſot ſtates, with equal force of language, the ruinous effects of all theſe meaſures; he ſays, " deſpo- " tiſm and anarchy are the benefits which we have " tranſplanted into this ſoil; we ſuppreſſed at once " all their ancient uſages, all their prejudices, all the " ranks and orders of their ſociety; we proſcribed " their prieſts; we treated their religious worſhip " with open marks of contempt; we ſeized their re- " venues, their domains, and their riches for the pro- " fit of the nation; we carried to the very altar thoſe " hands, which they regarded as profane."

" Doubtleſs, theſe operations were founded on * " true principles, but thoſe principles ought to have " had the conſent of the Belgians, before they were " carried into practice."

Have then the " true principles" of France been miſrepreſented, or exaggerated in this Houſe? Is it poſſible for the moſt honeſt and enthuſiaſtic indigna-

* Sur les Principes.

tion,

tion, which the ſcenes exhibited in France have raiſed in any Britiſh heart, to vent itſelf in terms of more ſeverity, than thoſe which Briſſot has uſed in expounding, what he juſtly calls, the true principles of the French republic? Now let us again confront Briſſot's confeſſions with his report in the name of the committee of general defence, on the 12th of January, 1793. "Shall I recal the accuſation of having invaded the Netherlands, of having dictated laws, and made a Conſtitution for that country? We make a Conſtitution there! read the inſtructions given to our Generals! to aſſemble the people, to conſult their wiſh, to enable them to expreſs it freely, to reſpect it when expreſſed, ſuch was our tyranny! The Belgians themſelves form, and alone will form their Conſtitution; but in order to lead them to that point, it is neceſſary to tie up the hands of the malevolent, of Auſtrian emiſſaries, who would excite ſedition, and this is the cauſe of ſome neceſſary acts of authority, this is the foundation of the Revolutionary power, which is nothing more than the guardian of liberty in her infancy, and which ceaſes to exiſt, as ſoon as ſhe has attained the age of maturity. We pillage Belgium! when we only deſire to be voluntarily reimburſed for the expences of a war, where the blood of our brothers is counted for nothing." So far Briſſot, and the Committee of General Safety; I now entreat the Houſe to hear the language of the Executive Council: "France calls back to freedom a people, which the Court of Vienna had devoted to ſlavery; her occupation of the Low Countries ſhall only continue during the war, and the time neceſſary to the Belgians to enſure and conſolidate their liberty, after which, let them be independent and happy. France will find her recompence in their felicity.

" felicity. When that nation ſhall be found in the " full enjoyment of liberty, when its general will " can lawfully declare itſelf without ſhackles, then if " England and Holland ſtill attach ſome importance " to the opening of the Scheldt, they may put the " affair into a direct negociation with Belgia. If the " Belgians, by any motive whatever, conſent to de- " prive themſelves of the navigation of the Scheldt, " France will not oppoſe it, ſhe will know how to reſ- " pect their independence, even in their errors. Af- " ter ſo frank a declaration, which manifeſts ſuch a " ſincere deſire of peace, his Britannic Majeſty's Mi- " niſters ought not to have any doubts with regard to " the intention of France."

It is difficult to determine whether the prevarications of Briſſot the reporter from the Committee of the General Safety, or the ſubterfuges of the Executive Council are moſt worthy of animadverſion ; both are ſo groſs and flagrant, that I cannot aggravate by any comments the impreſſion which they have already made, but when we recollect that the audacious violation of the law of nations, and of the acknowledged rights of our allies by the opening of the Scheldt, was juſtified upon no other ground than the maintenance of the *natural rights* of the *free* people of Belgium ; when we recollect, that the final adjuſtment of that important queſtion was poſtponed by France, until the time when the *liberty* of the Belgians ſhould be *ſecured and conſolidated*, and when the *general will of the people, could lawfully declare itſelf without ſhackles*, the tyranny exerciſed by France over the Netherlands, and the violence and corruption employed to procure the Union, cannot fail to excite the general indignation of this Houſe. Moſt of us indeed were not deceived by the *frank* declaration of the Executive Council of France ; but thoſe few amongſt us who ſeemed to be deceived

deceived by it at that time, and who under that deception maintained the juſtice of the pretences of France, muſt find additional motives of reſentment and indignation in the recollection of the impoſture, which was ſo ſucceſsfully practiſed at leaſt upon them: if they had been poſſeſſed of the information which I have detailed to the Houſe, I am perſuaded that they would never have propoſed to us to carry to the foot of the Throne an Addreſs, containing the paragraph, which I ſhall now read to you, relative to the navigation of the Scheldt*.

"We muſt further remark, that the point in diſ-
"pute ſeems to us to have been relieved from a moſt
"material difficulty, by a declaration of the Miniſter
"of Foreign Affairs in France, that the French Na-
"tion gave up all pretenſions to determine the
"queſtion of the future navigation of the Scheldt."

The inſult and mockery of that declaration is now ſo evident, that I cannot ſuppoſe it poſſible that any perſon ſhould retain the opinion, that the Executive Council ever had a ſincere intention of relinquiſhing at any time the pretenſions of France to determine the queſtion of the navigation of the Scheldt, or any other queſtion which might affect her operations in the Netherlands: the object of a declaration ſo inconſiſtent with the whole ſyſtem purſued by France in the Netherlands could only be to delude this country with falſe pretences of moderation, until it might be convenient to diſcover in the face of day, and to enforce by the ſword againſt every nation in Europe the inordinate ſcheme of ambition, of which the re-union of Belgium and the opening of the Scheldt formed but an inconſiderable part.

* Addreſs moved by C. Grey, Eſq. on the 1ſt of February.

The deſigns of France againſt Holland might be inferred from her general views of aggrandizement, and particularly from the eſtabliſhed maxim of her policy, *that France ought to know no other barrier to the eaſtward than the Rhine*; a maxim, avowed by Briſſot, by Dumourier, and at different periods by almoſt every perſon who has acted a leading part in the government of France ſince the maſſacre of the 10th of Auguſt. But the correſpondence between Dumourier and Pache the Miniſter of War, which has been publiſhed, and of the authenticity of which no doubt can be entertained, has placed the hoſtile views of France againſt Holland in ſo ſtrong and ſo clear a light, that it would be injuſtice to the argument to reſt it entirely upon the general grounds already ſtated. It has been contended, that the rejection by the Executive Council of Dumourier's propoſal to invade Holland in the month of November 1792, was a ſtrong proof of the pacific diſpoſition, and of the good faith which prevailed in the Councils of France at that time: but it appears that on the 30th of November Dumourier, in a letter addreſſed to the Miniſter of War, communicated in detail, a plan for the immediate invaſion of Holland, and ſtated the previous conqueſt of Holland to be eſſential to the great object of driving the Auſtrian and Pruſſian armies beyond the Rhine. One of the principal arguments which he alledges in favour of this operation is founded in the hoſtile views which he attributes to Holland, and in his apprehenſion that if he ſhould move towards the Rhine before he had effected a revolution in Holland, his rear might be expoſed to a ſudden attack from the Dutch. It appears that the Miniſter of war *expreſsly warrants the neutrality of the Dutch in the beginning of December* to Dumourier. But notwithſtanding that aſſurance, the queſtion between the immediate invaſion of Holland, and a movement towards the Rhine is argued throughout

throughout the whole of the official correſpondence *merely upon grounds of expediency*; the doubt being only, whether the operations of Dumourier's army in the month of December ſhould commence, or terminate with the invaſion of Holland; this will appear more clearly from a paſſage in the laſt orders from the Miniſter of war to Dumourier on this ſubject, dated December the 6th, 1792. "Thus, if the Army of "Belgium ſhould attack Holland, and not paſs the "Rhine, the Auſtrians will be able to attack Bour-"nonville, and to force him to abandon the Banks "of the Moſelle; Cuſtine might be endangered. "Theſe motives have determined the Executive Coun-"cil, and they have reſolved (as a meaſure of ur-"gency *, and which ought to take the lead of the "invaſion of *Holland* † which you propoſe,) that "you ſhall diſpoſe the three armies, under your "orders, in the manner in which you judge the moſt "proper for driving the Auſtrians from the countries "comprehended between the Meuſe, the Moſelle, and "the Rhine."

This letter leaves no doubt on my mind, that if the French could have ſucceeded in driving the Auſtrians and Pruſſians beyond the Rhine early in December 1792, they would without ſcruple have fallen upon Holland, although by the confeſſion of the Miniſter of War in the month of December, the Dutch had given them no ground of offence.

Such are the various proofs and occurrences which tend to confirm thoſe impreſſions of the deſigns of France, in conſequence of which we thought it our duty to enable his Majeſty to augment his forces previous to the declaration of war.

* Une meſure d'urgence.

† Qui devoit devancer l'invaſion de la Hollande.

The aggreſſion of France, which was the immediate cauſe of the war, forms another material branch of the argument; it was attempted to be juſtified under the pretence of certain alledged acts of hoſtility, particularly the ſtopping the export of corn to France in the month of November 1792: that meaſure was defended by my Right Hon. Friends near me on the ground of their knowledge, that warlike preparations were then actually making in France. Upon this ſubject, Briſſot's teſtimony is not only ample and unequivocal, but it proves that preparations had been commenced at an earlier period, and were propoſed to be carried to a much greater extent than could have been ſuppoſed by any perſon in this country in the month of November: He tells us, "that as early as "the month of October, the poſſibility of War with "the maritime powers was foreſeen, and the Diplo-"matic Committee and the Committee of General "Defence had warned Monge the Miniſter of Marine "of this circumſtance. Conſiderable ſums of money "were put into his hands; he had promiſed * to col-"lect ſtores and proviſions from all quarters, to re-"pair all the ſhips and frigates; he had promiſed a "fleet of 30 ſail of the line for the month of April, "and 50 ſail of the line by the month of July; he "had promiſed to cover the ſea with frigates for the "protection of commerce, to ſend ſuccours to St. "Domingo and Martinique, an expreſs law paſſed in "October enjoined this." While France was thus preparing an armament againſt the maritime Powers, what ſhould we have thought of the conduct of our Miniſters, if they had ſuffered the export of corn to that country, and thereby had contributed to accelerate the equipment of thoſe formidable fleets which

* S'approviſionner de tous les cotès.

the

the miniſter of Marine had engaged to provide? It ought not to be forgotten, that the ſame Government of France which had ordered preperations for equipping a fleet in the French ports as early as the month of October, thought it decent in the month of January, to make the armaments preparing by his Majeſty a principal ground of complaint, and to inſiſt as the ultimatum of France, that England ſhould diſarm: a more inſulting propoſal under all the circumſtances of the caſe as I have now ſtated them was never made by one independent nation to another.

But while we are inquiring in this Houſe into the immediate cauſe of the war, we may derive ſome uſeful information on that head from the contentions and diviſions which have diſturbed the Councils of our enemies. In the act of Accuſation againſt Briſſot and his party one principal charge is, "the propoſal "from the Diplomatic Committee by the organ of "Briſſot to declare war abruptly againſt England, "War againſt Holland, War againſt all the Powers "which had not yet declared themſelves."

During the trial of Briſſot, Chaumette ſays in the Jacobin Club, "every patriot has a right to accuſe "in this place the man who voted the war; and the "blood which has been ſhed in the Republic and "without the Republic in conſequence of it ſhall be "their proofs and their reaſons."

Robeſpierre in his Report on the 17th of November 1793 ſays, "with what baſe hypocriſy the trai-"tors inſiſted on certain pretended inſults ſaid to "have been offered to our Ambaſſador!"

Briſſot on the other hand replies, "who has been "the Author of this War? The Anarchiſts only, "and yet they make it a crime in us."

Thus, amidſt the animoſities and diſſenſions which preceded the laſt Revolution at Paris, the heinous crime

crime of having provoked the War with England is mutually imputed by one party to the other. Robeſpierre imputes it to Briſſot; Briſſot retorts it upon Robeſpierre; the Jacobins charge it upon the Girondiſts; the Girondiſts recriminate upon the Jacobins; the Mountain thunders it upon the Valley; and the Valley re-echoes it back againſt the Mountain; for my part, I condemn them both—the ſhare of this guilt, which belongs to Briſſot and his aſſociates is already known to you; they who murdered Briſſot and his aſſociates upon the ſcaffold, were not only the moſt active promoters of the decree of the 19th of November, and of the ſeveral unions, but the principal Agents in all the odious vexations exerciſed over the people of the Netherlands, and not one voice among them was raiſed againſt the meaſures which immediately led to the war. Therefore I repeat it, whatever be the crime of having drawn down upon their own country the indignation of Great Britain, and of her numerous allies, and of having fomented a general war in Europe, I charge that crime equally upon both theſe ſanguinary factions. But who is the Britiſh ſubject that ſhall acquit both theſe ſanguinary factions of the crime which they mutually impute to each other? and by charging it upon the Councils of his own Sovereign ſhall impair the confidence of an united people in the juſtice of their cauſe, and weaken the energy of their exertions in the proſecution of this arduous conteſt?

Unleſs I am wholly deceived in the authenticity and application of the proofs which I have adduced, cannot ſuppoſe that any ſuch perſon will appear in the courſe of this debate; and I muſt conclude, that theſe proofs, added to the arguments employed laſt year, have confirmed the original juſtice and neceſſity

of

of the war upon the moſt ſolid and ſecure foundation.

If then the original juſtice of our cauſe, inſtead of appearing to be in any degree weakened, has received additional force and confirmation from the whole courſe of ſubſequent events, it muſt be both our right and our duty (a right which a high ſpirited people will not eaſily concede, and a duty from the diſcharge of which they will not ſhrink) to proſecute the war without remiſſion, unleſs it can be made to appear, that all our efforts muſt be vain and fruitleſs, and that our enemies are not only formidable, but invincible by any force which we can bring to act againſt them. But although the events of the laſt campaign have undoubtedly proved that France, in her preſent ſituation, is a formidable enemy, ſo far from proving her to be invincible, I ſhall contend, that the general reſult of the campaign both in its effects upon our own ſituation, and upon that of the enemy, has been ſuch, as to afford a reaſonable expectation of ultimate ſucceſs.

What was our ſituation at the commencement of the laſt campaign? France was in full poſſeſſion of the Netherlands, and by the operation of the Revolutionary power under the decree of the 15th of December 1792, was rapidly adding to her own reſources not only all the ordinary reſources of that wealthy country, but the property of the Church, of the Nobility, of all the Corporations, the perſonal property of the Prince, and of all his adherents. Upon the firſt produce of this immenſe booty Dumourier had calculated, that he could ſupport an army of an hundred thouſand men for ten months. By the poſſeſſion of the port of Oſtend France commanded the commerce both of Holland and England, and had the means of interrupting the intercourſe between us and

our

our Allies. By the poſſeſſion of Antwerp and the meaſures which ſhe had taken relative to the navigation of the Scheldt, ſhe had the means of annoying Holland in that quarter; the poſſeſſion of Liege gave her the command of the Meuſe, and furniſhed her with great advantages in any operation which ſhe might meditate againſt Maeſtricht. Mentz was alſo in her hands, and the commerce of the Rhine was conſequently entirely at her mercy. She had a powerful army ready to enter the territory of Holland at the firſt moment of the war, with the avowed object not merely of conqueſt, but of effecting a Revolution in that country upon her own deſtructive principles; and in the Mediterranean ſhe had a formidable fleet, which had ſtruck all the Italian States with ſuch conſternation, as had given her the abſolute control over the commerce of that ſea, and the undiſputed command of whatever reſources could be drawn from the countries which border upon it. This was our ſituation at the opening of the campaign. It was no doubt truely ſerious, and ſuch as would not have tempted us to undertake a war, if peace could have been maintained conſiſtently with our ſafety and honour. It might reaſonably have been expected, that with ſuch advantages on her ſide the general balance of events would have been greatly in favour of France at the concluſion of the firſt campaign; eſpecially when it is conſidered, that the policy which has been adopted by this country, of keeping both her naval and military eſtabliſhments at the loweſt poſſible ſcale in time of peace, muſt neceſſarily confine the extent, and weaken the vigour of her efforts in the early periods of war.

Prophecies of a much more gloomy complection were uttered in this Houſe; we were told (nearly in the language of one of the extracts which I have read from Briſſot) that the ſea would be immediately covered

vered with the armed veſſels of our enemy, and that our commerce would be expoſed to depredation in every quarter; we were told in the ſame tone, that perhaps after five or ſix years of war, the Netherlands might be evacuated as the price of peace. What is our ſituation now at the concluſion of the firſt year of the war?

Holland has been ſaved; the importance of this event in the preſent ſituation of Europe may be eſtimated by the deſigns which France has uniformly entertained againſt that country ſince the time of her ſucceſs in the Netherlands. Robeſpierre lamenting that Dumourier did not invade Holland immediately after the conqueſt of the Netherlands, ſays; "If we "had invaded Holland, we ſhould have become ma-"ſters of the Dutch Navy; the wealth of that coun-"try would have been blended with our own, her "power added to that of France, the Government of "England would have been undone, and the Revo-"lution of Europe ſecured." The nature of the Revolution intended in Holland is now well known. When the invaſion of that country was projected, Cambon is ſaid to have declared, that "as the Dutch "had no Church Lands to offer to France for her in-"demnification in the war, the Dutch Revolution "muſt be made on new principles; it muſt be a Re-"volution of ſtrong boxes and purſes." The decree which paſſed about the time Dumourier entered Holland is a ſufficient commentary on this expreſſion; it ſhews that if the French had ſucceeded in that expedition, they would have ſtruck the moſt fatal blow that commercial credit has ever received.

But the protection of Holland was of great importance in another view. From the moment that France had declared war againſt the Dutch, Dumourier repeatedly ſtates, that the conqueſt of Holland was eſſentially neceſſary for the purpoſe of maintaining

the poſſeſſion of the Netherlands in the hands of the French; he ſays, that "without Holland the Nether-"lands muſt ſoon fall; and with Holland he enter-"tained no doubt of being able to oppoſe an effectual "barrier to the progreſs of the Auſtrian and Pruſſian "armies." The recovery of the Netherlands therefore was intimately connected with the protection of Holland. Whatever oppoſition was made to the force under the command of Dumourier in Holland, muſt in this view of the ſubject be conſidered as a combined operation with the attack of the Prince of Saxe-Cobourg upon the armies of Valence and Miranda on the banks of the Roer and of the Meuſe. It is certain, that the brilliant ſucceſſes of the Auſtrians would have been at leaſt retarded, if the gallant defence of Williamſtadt and of the paſſage of the Meuſe had not checked the progreſs of Dumourier, and prevented him from effecting a junction with the armies oppoſed to the Prince of Cobourg at an earlier period, and under circumſtances of greater advantage. It is unneceſſary to ſtate, that the ſeaſonable aſſiſtance afforded by this country to the Dutch, was *alone* the circumſtance which encouraged and enabled them to make ſo vigorous an effort in that critical conjuncture of their affairs. The recovery of Flanders, thus connected on the one hand with the defence of Holland, was on the other hand an object of equal importance to the permanent ſecurity of the Dutch frontier. It was alſo material to the proſecution of the war in many other requeſts. It deprived our enemies of reſources, which, according to the account given by Cambon, were become neceſſary to the ſupport of their declining finances, and added what was thus taken from them to the ſtrength of our Allies. Briſſot ſays, that "the "evacuation of Belgium tarniſhed the glory of the "Frencharms, and retarded" what he calls "the li-"berty of Europe." The Netherlands recovered under "ſuch circumſtances, have not only been maintained throughout

throughout the campaign, but an impreſſion has been made upon the frontier of France by the capture of Valenciennes, Condé and Queſnoy. Againſt theſe ſucceſſes are to be ſet the raiſing of the ſieges of Dunkirk and Maubeuge. Making the utmoſt allowance for each of thoſe failures, and comparing the circumſtances of our ſituation on the ſide of Holland and Flanders in the month of February, 1793, with their actual ſtate, it cannot be denied, that the campaign in Flanders has been productive of the moſt conſiderable acquiſitions both in point of territory and reſource, which this country and her allies ever obtained in that quarter in any ſingle year of our moſt proſperous wars. On the Rhine the recapture of Mentz and the progreſs made in Alſace after the diſtinguiſhed action of Weiſſembourg afforded effectual protection to the frontier of Germany during the greater part of the campaign, and operated as a powerful diverſion of the force of the enemy. Notwithſtanding the ſudden irruption of the French, by means of the requiſition of the maſs of the people, (a meaſure, the effects of which upon the internal ſituation of France I ſhall have occaſion to examine more particularly before I ſit down) our general ſituation is far more favourable than at the opening of the campaign. Although the French have regained a conſiderable part of the country from which they had been driven in the courſe of the ſummer, they have as yet been contending with us for our conqueſts, and not for any advantages which they did not poſſeſs before the commencement of the war. While our allies retain Mentz, it muſt be admitted, that after all the extraordinary exertions of the enemy their ſituation is much more diſadvantageous than it was in the month of July. In the territories of the King of Sardinia the French have made no additional progreſs. On the ſide of Spain they have ſuffered conſiderable loſſes. The blockade of the French fleet, in the port of Toulon by an in-

ferior

ſerior force was highly creditable to the naval honour of this country, and in the circumſtances attending the evacuation of that town, one of the moſt ſevere blows was given to the naval power of France, which has ever been ſtruck in the whole hiſtory of our marine, and the command of the Mediterranean was at once transferred from the hands of France into our own. If the fleets of the enemy have offered no opportunity to our's of obtaining any brilliant ſucceſs, let us compare the actual ſtate of our trade and commerce with thoſe gloomy predictions to which I have already alluded, and with the captures made from the enemy. On this ſubject I muſt again refer to the authority of Briſſot, which is corroborated by our own accounts: he ſays, "In the month of March all our "privateers were deſtroyed by the Engliſh in the "Channel. In the month of April our trading veſ-"ſels were taken by Engliſh frigates at the very "mouths of our rivers: our ſhips could not go into "the Mediterranean without danger; and yet we had "a fleet there of 15 ſhips of the line."

If we look to the reſult of the campaign abroad the proſpect is equally favourable; the fiſhery of Newfoundland, from which the French have been driven, has always been conſidered as a moſt valuable object; we know that it has formed one of the moſt conteſted articles in moſt of our negociations of peace ſince the commencement of the preſent century: the acquiſition of this fiſhery in the firſt campaign of the war muſt operate as a material check to one ſource of the naval power of France. In the Weſt Indies, the importance of the Iſland of Tobago, which we have acquired, may be eſtimated, when we recollect, that it was the only one of all her conqueſts which France retained at the peace of 1783 after all the calamities of the American War. In the iſland of St. Domingo we are in poſſeſſion of Nicola Mole, the moſt advantageous

tageous poſt with a view to the command of the windward paſſage, and of Jeremie, the part of the iſland which has ſuffered the leaſt from the ravages of Briſſot's commiſſioners. In the Eaſt Indies, the French have been expelled from all their poſſeſſions, excepting Pondicherry, the capture of which could not (according to the lateſt advices) long be delayed. The acquiſition of the fort of Mahé on the coaſt of Malabar, is of the greateſt advantage to our new territories on that coaſt, both with a view to the commerce and good government of thoſe countries; in a political view it is obviouſly of conſiderable importance that the French ſhould not continue to hold a poſſeſſion, which afforded them the means of ſo direct and eaſy an intercourſe with Tippoo Sultan.

"Thus, Sir, I have endeavoured to give a ſummary view of the events of the campaign; it does not belong to me to enter into any reply to the critical obſervations which have been made upon the conduct of particular expiditions, or upon the general diſpoſition and application of our naval and military force. That argument will not be declined by thoſe whoſe ſituation in his Majeſty's Councils renders them moſt competent to treat it with effect. But from what lies within the obſervation of every man we may collect, that the general reſult of the laſt campaign has not only exceeded our firſt expectations, but including all the advantages which the combined armies have obtained on the Continent of Europe, including the blow which has been ſtruck againſt the naval power of France, and the acquiſitions which we have made both in the Eaſt and Weſt Indies, and at Newfoundland, the general reſult of the laſt campaign has not been ſurpaſſed in effective advantage either with a view to indemnity, to ultimate ſecurity, or to the intermediate means of diſtreſſing the enemy during the continuance of the war, by any campaign in which this country has been

been engaged ſince the Revolution. And in this part of the argument it muſt never be forgotten, that this is the firſt campaign of the war. No man would attempt to deny, that ſuch a ſucceſs as we have obtained in the courſe of this year againſt France, would have been deemed of deciſive importance in the moſt brilliant periods of the French Monarchy. If therefore our ſucceſs is now to be undervalued, it muſt be from an opinion, that under the preſent circumſtances and ſituation of France, her reſources are ſo inexhauſtible, her ſtrength is ſo abſolutely unconquerable, that what would have been eſteemed a promiſing impreſſion againſt any other ſtate that ever exiſted, and againſt herſelf in other times, muſt now be conſidered as wholly nugatory and ineffectual. Let us examine whether we have any reaſonable ground to apprehend, that this enemy, whom we know to be ſo formidable, is really invincible; let us not be deterred by the magnitude of her temporary exertions from looking cloſely into the means by which they have been ſupported; let us ſearch the real foundations of her apparent ſtrength, and comparing them with the nature and ſources of our own power, let us decide upon the true and ſolid principles of political economy, and upon the eſtabliſhed maxims of all human government, whether both the probability of our ultimate ſucceſs, and the neceſſity of our preſent exertions are not greatly encreaſed by the extraordinary and unprecedented character of that ſyſtem, under which the powers of Government are now exerciſed in France.

At the entrance of this arduous and extenſive argument I feel myſelf embarraſſed by two difficulties of a very oppoſite kind:—To apply to the Government now prevailing in France the epithets which ſuch a ſcene would naturally ſuggeſt; to call it a ſyſtem of rapine, extortion, and fraud, under the colour of a

lawful

lawful revenue; of arbitrary impriſonment under the falſe pretence of liberty; of murder under the name of juſtice; a ſyſtem, which unites deſpotiſm with anarchy, and atheiſm with perſecution, and to adduce no particular facts and proofs in ſupport of ſuch a charge, might well be deemed idle declamation and empty invective: on the other hand, to attempt to bring before you all the ſhocking and diſguſting ſcenes by which every part of this charge might be confirmed, would lead to a detail wholly unfit for the ears of a Britiſh Houſe of Commons. I ſhall endeavour with the utmoſt care to avoid both theſe extremes; but if from the very nature of the dreadful tranſactions on which it is my duty to comment, I ſhould ſometimes fall into either, the indulgence of the Houſe will not be refuſed either to the natural ſentiment of indignation which the view of ſuch crimes muſt excite, or to my anxiety to draw from them concluſions which may be juſtly and uſefully applied to the ſubject of our preſent deliberation. It is my intention to advert only to ſuch of the fundamental principles, and of the leading branches of this monſtrous ſyſtem of Government, as will furniſh the moſt certain grounds for any poſſible eſtimate of its real force, and of its probable duration. But although, every fact which I ſhall adduce will be directed to this particular point of the argument in the firſt inſtance, from the ſame facts, other conſiderations will ariſe, and other concluſions will be drawn not leſs applicable in my opinion to the general queſtion of this day.

The ſame circumſtances which explain the nature of that power with which we have to contend, will alſo explain the cauſes of whatever difficulties we may have encountered in the conteſt, and enable us to judge, whether they are to be ſurmounted by perſeverance: the ſame circumſtances will alſo ſerve to ſhew-

whether

whether the further extenſion of the ſyſtem now prevalent in France is to be conſidered as a matter of indifference, or as an object of terror by the other powers of Europe, and particularly by Great Britain; and whether it be, or be not an eſſential and inherent quality of that ſyſtem, to extend itſelf abroad, as the only ſecurity for its exiſtence at home. Theſe and other inferences will be made from whatever detail I may be permitted to lay before you, in endeavouring to give you a faithful picture of the true ſtate and condition of France at the preſent moment.

On the 31ſt of May, a revolution took place in the Government of France, as extraordinary in its circumſtances, and as ſudden and violent in its effects, as any of thoſe convulſions by which that unhappy conntry has been afflicted at any period of the late diſturbances. By a repetition of preciſely the ſame violences which had been uſed to bring about all the former revolutions, through the terror which the Jacobin Club inſpired, aud by the abſolute dominion which the Municipality of Paris has invariably exerciſed over the pretended National Aſſemblies, a few individuals of no diſtinguiſhed talents, of the moſt deſperate and profligate characters, deſpiſed until that moment even in France for the wild extravagance of their principles, and deteſted even there for their ſanguinary and vindictive ſpirit, drove from the government a powerful Majority of the Convention, conſiſting of men who, although equally guilty of the crimes and calamities of their country, were at leaſt ſupported by whatever remained of landed or commercial intereſt in the nation, by a great majority of the departments, and by all the principal cities and manufacturing towns. Above an hundred and forty Members of the convention were expelled by force from their ſeats in one day; many of them were immediately impriſoned, and ſince that time thoſe, who have

have not periſhed on the ſcaffold, have either fled the country, or deſtroyed themſelves from the terror of ſuffering the ſame indignities and cruelties which they had already exerciſed on others, and which they would have exerciſed on their preſent antagoniſts, if the victory in this deſperate conteſt had taken a different inclination.

I ſhall not dwell in this place upon the inſtability of any engagement which could have been entered into with a Government ſubject from its nature to ſuch ſudden, total, and repeated changes, both of men, and of meaſures; I will only requeſt you to bear this general obſervation in mind, and to apply it to a ſubſequent part of the argument.

The party, which had triumphed by ſuch means, recollecting that the Convention had been choſen for the expreſs purpoſe of new-modelling the Conſtitution, although little or no progreſs had been hitherto made in that work, haſtily, in the courſe of three weeks after their acceſſion to power put forth a moſt extraordinary production, under the title of a new Conſtitution.

This new verſion of the natural rights of man contains a digeſt of every viſionary notion of political liberty which has appeared in the ſpeculations of the moſt wild of all the French philoſophers, mixed with ſome principles and regulations which bear the appearance of regard for the lives, liberties, and properties of the people. Whatever may be the abſurdities of this ſyſtem, it at leaſt ſerves to ſhew what were the principles of Government which the preſent rulers of France aſſerted to be not only indiſpenſably neceſſary to the happineſs of the people, but founded in ſtrict right; and in this view it may be a matter of curioſity to compare this conſtitution, with the ſubſequent meaſures of thoſe who framed it. Not only the

extravagant principle of individual ſuffrage, but its natural conſequence the principle of individual legiſlation were enacted in their fulleſt extent; the laws were to be ſubmitted to the ſanction of the primary aſſemblies, and to derive their validity and binding force from the individual aſſent of above twenty millions of men. It was particularly enacted, that all regulations affecting civil and criminal juſtice, the nature, amount, and collection of public contributions, and all alterations in the current coin, or circulating medium ſhould require the previous ſanction of the whole collective body of the people; certain objects of inferior importance were to be determined by the decrees of the repreſentative body without any reference to their Conſtitutents; the repreſentative body was to be changed annually; the Executive Council, in which was ſolely veſted whatever Executive authority was ſuffered to remain in the ſtate, was to be ſelected by the convention from a liſt framed by the electoral aſſemblies of the people, one half of which liſt was to be renewed every ſix months; the municipal officers were to be choſen abſolutely by the people in the departments. In order to render the adminiſtration of criminal juſtice independent of the Executive or Legiſlative authority it was enacted, that the judges in all the ordinary courts of juſtice ſhould be annually choſen by the electoral aſſemblies; and that there ſhould be a court of general appeal, the judges of which ſhould be elected in the ſame manner. Certain leading principles were ſolemnly recogniſed both in the declaration of rights and in the concluding part of the Conſtitution, which is entitled the guarantee of the rights of man—theſe principles were, "that no man "ſhould be judged and puniſhed, until he had been "heard; that puniſhments ſhould bear a due propor-"tion to crimes; that the right of property was that

"right

" right which belongs to every citizen, of enjoying " and diſpoſing of according to his pleaſure his goods, " his income, the fruits of his labour and of his induſ- " try ;—that no perſon could be deprived of the leaſt " portion of his property, without his own conſent, " unleſs under the preſſure of a public neceſſity legal- " ly proved, and under the condition of a juſt and " previous indemnity ; that the right of petitioning " ought in no caſe to be interdicted, ſuſpended, or " limited ; that the people have always the right to " review, reform, and change the conſtitution ; and " finally, that the conſtitution guarantees to the whole " people of France, liberty, ſafety, property, the " public debt, the free exerciſe of religious worſhip, " the right of petitioning, and the right of aſſembling " in popular ſocieties." And for the better ſecurity of the people againſt any violation of theſe rights and privileges, it was declared, " that the oppreſſion of " a ſingle member of the ſociety was to be deemed " the oppreſſion of the whole body: and that when- " ever the government ſhould violate the rights of the " people, inſurrection became both the moſt ſacred " right, and the moſt indiſpenſable duty not only of " the people at large, but of every portion and divi- " ſion of them."

This formal recognition of ſome principles of inconteſtible truth, mingled with many of the moſt incoherent dreams, and many of the moſt pernicious doctrines which ever occurred to the moſt enthuſiaſtic zealot, or to the moſt wicked conſpirator in the cauſe of abſolute and unqualified democracy, was tendered to the people in the ſeveral departments for their acceptance ; and, if we are to believe the reports made to the convention, was actually accepted by a large majority. The acceptance of this model of perfection which was to ſecure for ever the happi-

neſs

neſs and proſperity of France was ſolemnly celebrated by a civic feaſt on a day aptly choſen for ſuch a ceremony, on the anniverſary of the maſſacre of the 10th of Auguſt, when the laſt conſtitution to which the people of France had ſworn was overthrown by force, when magiſtrates were murdered for executing the laws, citizens for defending property, and troops for obeying the orders of thoſe to whom by law they owed obedience. But mark the ſequel of this ſolumnity. The diſſolution of the Convention, the neceſſary and immediate conſequence of this new conſtitution, would have deſtroyed the power of the now reigning party: many other branches of this conſtitution would have been equally incompatible with the duration of their authority: not only therefore thoſe articles which related to the form of the Executive power and to the election of the legiſlature were left unexecuted, but the whole Municipal conſtitution, and every article in any degree favourable to perſonal liberty, to life, or to property were continually violated without ſcruple, and without diſguiſe; until on the 10th of October, the entire ſyſtem of the indefeaſible, inalienable Rights of Man, from which nothing can derogate, which admit of no modifications of expediency, which neither bend to times nor circumſtances, nor even to the practical happineſs of ſociety, was formally and openly ſuſpended; and in defiance of the ſovereign people a new and unheard-of ſpecies of government was eſtabliſhed, which, growing out of the theory of impracticable liberty, was to be maintained by the practice of the moſt unmitigated tyranny. A decree was paſſed, by which the whole executive authority of the State was drawn into the hands of the Committee of Public Welfare. Proviſion was made for the rapid execution of what are termed Revolutionary laws; and for the direction

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and employment of a Revolutionary Army in order to repreſs every ſymptom of a Counter-Revolutionary ſpirit; and among the great fundamental articles of this counter-conſtitution it was decreed, that the corn and grain in the ſeveral departments ſhould be ſeized at the diſcretion of the new Government; and that garriſons ſhould be placed in all counter-revolutionary towns to be paid and maintained at the ſole charge of perſons of property. This decree was propoſed expreſsly for the purpoſe of puniſhing "not traitors "only, but even thoſe who dared to be indifferent "to the cauſe of the exiſting Government, who had "the audacity to be paſſive, and to do nothing for the "ſoverignty of the people:" it was ſaid, "that ſuch "perſons muſt be governed by the ſword, ſince it was "impoſſible to govern them by the maxims of juſtice;" it was ſaid, "that the conſtitution of the 10th of Au-"guſt, 1793, was not ſufficiently violent to repreſs "ſuch dangerous attempts againſt liberty;" it was ſaid, "that revolutionary laws could never be execu-"ted, unleſs the government itſelf was conſtituted in "a revolutionary manner." Such was the origin, and ſuch is the form of that monſter in politics, of which, as the very notion involves a contradiction of ideas, the name cannot be expreſſed without a contradiction in terms,—*A Revolutionary Government!* a Government which, for the ordinary adminiſtration of affairs reſorts to thoſe means of violence and outrage, which had been hitherto conſidered even in France as being excluſively appropriated to the laudable and ſacred purpoſe of ſubverting all lawful and regular authority. The ſenſe of the epithet Revolutionury, which is ſo laviſhly applied by the convention to every part of this new ſyſtem, requires ſome explanation. An extract from the proceedings of the National Convention will ſerve to exemplify the manner

ner in which that ſingular phraſe is underſtood and admired by the moſt unqueſtionable authority in the ſcience of revolutions. Barrere makes a report reſpecting the ſituation of the Republic in the month of December, he reads a variety of diſpatches from the National Commiſſioners in various parts of the Republic; and at length he produces a letter from Carrier, one of the Commiſſioners of the Convention, dated Nantz, December the 10th. This letter, after giving an account of a ſucceſsful attack againſt the Royaliſts, concludes with the following remarkable words: "This event has been followed by another which has "however nothing new in its nature. Fifty-eight "individuals known by the name of Refractory "Prieſts arrived at Nantz from Angers. They were "ſhut up in a barge on the river Loire, and laſt "night they were all ſunk to the bottom of that river. "—What a Revolutionary torrent is the Loire!"— You expect perhaps to hear, that the diſguſting relation of this inhuman action raiſed ſome emotions of horror, if not of compaſſion in the audience; you expect to hear, that the Convention manifeſted their reſentment at this abuſe of the revolutionary language; but does any ſymptom of ſuch ſentiments appear?— No! after having liſtened to this *intereſting* report, the Convention votes the following reſolution: "The "National Convention, highly ſatisfied with the re- "port of Barrere, orders it to be printed, inſerted in "the Votes, and ſent to all the armies."

Highly ſatisfied with this figurative illuſtration of the ſtyle and title of that gracious and mild Government which they had ſo lately inſtituted, they order it to be proclaimed and publiſhed over the whole territory of the Republic, to conciliate the affections of a free people, and to animate the enthuſiaſm of a brave and generous army. Here you learn the full force

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and energy of their new phraſeology. The Loire is a Revolutionary torrent, becauſe it has been found an uſeful and expeditious inſtrument of maſſacre, becauſe it has deſtroyed by a ſudden and violent death fifty-eight men, againſt whom no crime was alledged but the venerable character of their ſacred function, and their faithful adherence to the principles of their religion. But this event is truly ſaid to have nothing new in its nature; I dwell upon it for the application of the phraſe, not for the ſingularity of the fact: every proceeding ſince the commencement of the troubles in France which has been dignified by the title of Revolutionary, is marked with ſimilar characters of violence or blood. The ſeizure of the property of the clergy and of the nobility was a Revolutionary meaſure;—the aſſaſſinations of Foulon and Berthier at Paris, and of the King's guards at Verſailles in the year 1789, were Revolutionary meaſures: All the ſucceeding outrages, the burning of the title deeds and country houſes of all gentlemen of landed property, the numberleſs confiſcations, baniſhments, proſcriptions, and murders of innocent perſons—all theſe were Revolutionary meaſures—the maſſacres of the 10th of Auguſt, and of the 2d of September—the attempt to extend the miſeries of civil diſcord over the whole world, the more ſucceſsful project of involving all Europe in the calamities of a general war, were *truly* Revolutionary meaſures;—the inſulting mockery of a pretended trial, to which they ſubjected their humane and benevolent Sovereign, and the horrid cruelty of his unjuſt, precipitate, and execrable murder, were *moſt* Revolutionary meaſures: it has been the art of the ruling faction of the preſent hour to compound and to conſolidate the ſubſtance of all theſe dreadful tranſactions in one maſs, to concentrate all their noxious principles, and by a new

new proceſs to extract from them a ſpirit, which combines the malignity of each with the violence of all, and that is the true ſpirit of a Revolutionary Government.

Some of the general principles and fundamental maxims maintained by the founders of this Government are ſo curious, that it is impoſſible to paſs them over in ſilence. They repreſent, that in a Revolutionary ſtate *civil liberty*, (including the perſonal freedom, the intereſts, and the happineſs of individuals) is but a ſecondary object, the principal end of ſuch a Government being (what they call) *public liberty*, which, according to their definition, does not conſiſt in the perſonal freedom of individuals, but in the unreſtrained and arbitrary exerciſe of the Supreme Executive Power. They aſſert that under the exiſting circumſtances *liberty muſt be conſidered to be in a ſtate of war*, not with foreign powers merely, but with her numerous enemies in the boſom of the Republic: it follows as a conſequence of this principle, that thoſe who act under the commiſſion of liberty may for her ſake impriſon, plunder, and deſtroy by the ſword the inhabitants of France, according to the rights of war as exerciſed by belligerent powers in an enemy's country. This abſtract idea of liberty at war with the properties, the lives, and the perſonal freedom of the people, however incomprehenſible to a nation accuſtomed to feel the practical and ſubſtantial advantages of a free Conſtitution, is the favourite doctrine of Robeſpierre, to which the Convention has ſubſcribed with the warmeſt zeal: connected with this is the main and leading maxim upon which their whole ſyſtem turns: It is expreſſed in terms which, although originally derived from the proceedings of this Houſe, will appear to you, Sir, ſomewhat ſingular in their application; it is, "that terror ſhould be the order of

"the

" the day ;" and that, (for the purpoſe of enforcing a general obſervance of this order) " the ſalutary " movement of terror ſhould be circulated from one " extremity of the Republic to the other by means of " a rapid execution of the Revolutionary laws." Here then you perceive that terror is not only the avowed inſtrument, but the ſole end of what in this new ſyſtem is called by the name of *law*. The Government openly renounces the antiquated error of founding itſelf in the affections, the intereſts, and the happineſs of the people, and publicly declares with a boldneſs unparalleled in the hiſtory of uſurpation, that it neither poſſeſſes, nor expects, nor deſires any other ſecurity for the maintenance of its power than abject fear, and general conſternation.

To diffuſe this conſternation as widely as poſſible, and to remove every obſtacle to the rapid circulation of that ſentiment which was ſo eſſentially neceſſary to the vigour and action of the adminiſtration, an operation was performed, which may be conſidered as the preliminary ſtep to the general introduction of the whole plan. In open violation of the principles ſolemnly ſanctioned in the Conſtitution, whereby the abſolute choice of the municipal officers is reſerved to the people, Commiſſioners were ſent into every city, town, and village of France, *to regenerate the municapilities* ; that is, to ſubſtitute in the place of municipal officers, choſen by the inhabitants under their forms of election, other officers named according to the ſole and arbitrary will of theſe commiſſioners.

But even this was not ſufficient ; the right of aſſembling in popular ſocieties, which had been deemed of ſuch importance, as to hold a place in that part of the conſtitution which is entitled *the guarantee of the rights of man*, being found inconvenient in a Revolutionary ſtate, was alſo ſet aſide without ſcruple ; and

the ſame commiſſioners had orders to *regenerate all the popular ſocieties.* This work of regeneration was performed differently according to the exigency of the particular caſe ; in ſome places the obnoxious perſons were impriſoned, in others they were executed, and in all they were replaced, as I have already ſtated, by perſons named at the diſcretion of the Commiſſioners. In many inſtances however the averſion to the new tyranny was found ſo obſtinate and incurable, that the Commiſſioners were actually obliged to ſend to Paris for good Sans Culottes warranted by the Jacobin Club, and to appoint them to fill the municipal offices and the popular ſocieties. The extract which I ſhall now read from a letter of one of theſe Commiſſioners, will give a ſummary view of this extraordinary ſtretch of arbitrary power, and of the principles with which it was connected : " Herault " Sechelles, in a letter dated Plotzheim, Nov. the " 27th, gave an account of his meaſures for reſtoring " the Republican ſpirit in the department of the Up- " per Rhine. He had regenerated the popular ſo- " cieties and committees ; organized the movement " of terror ; created a central Committee of Revo- " lutionary activity ; detached a Revolutionary force " from the army to traverſe the whole department ; " erected a Revolutionary tribunal ; and was prepar- " ing a feaſt, and celebrity of reaſon, a remarkable " conqueſt in that part of the country over profound " ignorance and inveterate fanaticiſm." Thus, Sir, was erected a Government, which in its form, in its avowed principles, and in its general ſpirit is not only incompatible with the exiſtence of all juſt and rational liberty, but directly contradictory to all thoſe opinions which have been ſo induſtriouſly inculcated in France, and to every doctrine which has been (to uſe their own phraſe) conſecrated in either the new or the

old

old verſion of the Rights of Man. Thus was eſtabliſhed, and thus is now exerciſed a Government, which is, in the ſtricteſt ſenſe of the words, the moſt atrocious and the moſt degrading tyranny that has ever trampled on the liberties, and ſported with the happineſs of a great nation.

If this deſcription ſeems to be exaggerated, look at the practice, look at the details of this Government! View its operation and effect upon all thoſe means, by which the great ends of civil ſociety are to be accompliſhed!

Enquire from what ſources and through what channels it draws the public revenue? how it affects the ſyſtems of agriculture and commerce? with what attention to the internal proſperity of the country it levies and maintains the public force? what proviſion it makes for the pure and equal adminiſtration of juſtice? how it regards religion, that great baſis of every moral and civil duty? and as the reſult of all theſe conſiderations, what is the real condition of all the inhabitants of France, with reſpect to the ſecurity of liberty, of property, and of life? and conſequently, what muſt be the diſpoſition and temper of the people? what the permanent ſtrength of the ſtate under all its actual circumſtances? and what the ſtability of that power, which now menaces, and holds at defiance the united force of Europe?

At the acceſſion of the Revolutionary Government, the expenditure of France ſtood, as far as can be gathered from an account of three months at the end of the year 1792, at the enormous rate of twelve millions ſterling per month. The reſources of the country had already been greatly injured by former miſmanagement: agriculture and internal trade had already ſuffered by the firſt attempts towards the eſtabliſhment of that gigantic ſyſtem of military force, which

which has ſince been carried to ſuch an exceſs; foreign commerce had already much declined; and both public and private credit had been greatly embarraſſed by the quantity of aſſignats in circulation; an evil of ſuch magnitude, that even as early as the month of November 1792, the plunder of the Netherlands was propoſed by the Miniſter of Finance, as the only remedy which could avert the impending danger.

Since the revolution of the 31ſt of May the expenditure has been ſo much encreaſed, that according even to the accounts laid before the Convention itſelf, the expence of the month of Auguſt was above *eighteen millions ſterling*: and there is reaſon to believe that the real charges of the ſucceeding months may have exceeded that ſum. But as the *levèe en maſſe*, or compulſory levy of the maſs of the people took place about that time, by which it is ſtated that five hundred thouſand additional men have been raiſed, the maintenance of ſo vaſt an army muſt be ſuch an encreaſed charge, as ſeems to juſtify the ſuppoſition that eighteen millions ſterling may be taken as the average of the preſent monthly expenditure of the Revolutionary Government. This would make an *annual expenditure of two hundred and ſixteen millions ſterling*, a ſum which nearly approaches to the amount of the whole national debt of England *.

* The deficiency between the total receipt of revenue, ordinary and extraordinary, and the total expenditure of France, according to the monthly accounts was, in French livres

For April, 1793 - - - -	460,000,000
May, - - - - -	315,000,000
June, - - - - -	192,000,000
July, - - - - -	253,000,000
Auguſt. - - - -	400,000,000
Sept. ſuppoſed from encreaſed expence	400,000,000
£.	2,020,000,000

The

The total ordinary revenue of France before the war was ſtated to be about 600 millions, or about 25 millions ſterling, ariſing from duties on imports, taxes upon real and perſonal property, ſtamp duties, and duties on regiſtry of deeds, bills of exchange, notes of hand, &c.

The total collective income of all the individuals in France is ſtated in the Financial Reports of the preſent Government to be one hundred and twenty millions ſterling, of which one-third is ſaid to ariſe from commerce; ſo that if the account here given be correct, (and there is every reaſon to credit it,) it appears that the annual expenditure of the Government of France at preſent exceeds the total collective income of the individuals of the country by the enormous ſum of 96 millions ſterling: or, in other words, that there is an annual waſte of ninety-ſix millions of the Aggregate Capital of France by the expenditure of the government alone, beſides what is conſumed by the expenditure of private individuals. To ſupply an expenditure infinitely exceeding the prodigality and extravagance of any government that ever yet appeared in the world, the Revolutionary Government had recourſe at firſt to the practice of encreaſing the maſs of paper money. They declared, that they had no other means of ſuſtaining the preſſure of the preſent war, than by the creation of an additional quantity of Aſſignats upon the pledge of the *National Property*; conſiſting of the ancient church lands, the eſtates of the crown, the reſumed grants or ſales of crown lands, and the eſtates real and perſonal of the emigrants, and of all perſons executed for

This makes the deficiency for a year, upon a computation drawn from 6 months from April to September at the exchange of 30, or 10d. Engliſh per French livre—about 166,640,000l. ſterling.

ſtate

ſtate crimes. But they have been compelled to confeſs, that this reſource of aſſignats cannot be available to any thing like the extent to which it was carried by their predeceſſors; and both from their language and their meaſures there is every reaſon to believe, that they are convinced it cannot long be available at all. There is not a ſingle ſpeech or report upon the ſubject of Finance, in which the quantity of aſſignats already in circulation is not repreſented as a grievance of the moſt urgent nature. In one of the reports they declare, that aſſignats are become their only inſtrument of commerce and meaſure of value; they give them the favourite title of *Revolutionary Money*; and then they deſcribe their effect, which is indeed of the genuine Revolutionary character; they ſay, "*aſſignats grind the poor, cheat the rich, foment* "*avarice, and nouriſh every ſpecies of ruinous ſpecu-* "*lation* *."

Upon this reaſoning, they determine that it is abſolutely neceſſary to diminiſh the quantity of aſſignats in circulation, and they enter upon a variety of projects and experiments for that purpoſe, which together form a ſyſtem of finance ſo abſurd and iniquitous in its principle, and ſo rapidly deſtructive in its operation, that its exiſtence, in an age converſant with every queſtion of political economy would be incredible,

* The total number of aſſignats created, has been - - - 5,100,000,000
En caiſſe, on the 1ſt of May - 485,000,000
Iſſued about - - 4,615,000,000
Burnt to 1ſt of Auguſt - - 840.000,000
Remained - - 3,775,000,000
Royal aſſignats demonetiſés - 558,000,000
In circulation on the 1ſt day of Auguſt, 1793 3,217,000,000
Or above 130 millions ſterling.

N. B. This ſum is exclucive of forged aſſignats to a great amount.

if

if it were not capable of proof by reference to the authentic reports of the ſeveral committees, and to the decrees of the convention. One of their firſt ſteps was to forbid, under the colour of a republican zeal for the extinction of every trace and veſtige of the monarchy, the circulation of all aſſignats of above an hundred livres, bearing the image of the late King. This outrageous act of public fraud is attempted to be juſtified by a moſt ſingular train of reaſoning. Twelve or fifteen hundred millions of livres, (that is, about 50 or 60 millions ſterling) they ſay, are due on account of arrears by the purchaſers of National domains; and ſix or ſeven hundred millions of livres (that is, from 25 to 30 millions ſterling) are due on account of arrears of taxes; they therefore permit theſe *diſmonied* * aſſignats, as they call them, to be received at the public treaſury in payment of either of theſe claſſes of arrears, provided ſuch payment be made before the 1ſt of January, 1794 †. It is evident that this relief could have only a partial operation; it makes no proviſion whatever for the caſe of that numerous deſcription of perſons who might be in poſſeſſion of royal aſſignats of above the value of an hundred livres, and yet might not be indebted to the public treaſury to that amount. But this was followed by a proceeding ſtill more violent; on the 14th of Dec. it appeared that there remained royal aſſignats of above 100 livres outſtanding to the amount of 178 millions of livres, a ſum exceeding 7 millions ſterling. Cambon, in reporting upon the ſubject treats this ſum as a mere trifle: he adds, that none but ariſtocrats could at that period be the holders of royal aſſignats, and no body could feel any

* Demonetiſés.

† This decree paſſed on the 31ſt of Auguſt 1793.

regret

regret at ſeeing them periſh in ſuch hands; beſides, the Republic would gain 50 or 60 millions (or about 2,500,000l. ſterling) by this new operation. Upon this ground, a decree paſſed on the 14th of Dec. declaring that after the 1ſt of January 1794, no royal aſſignat of above an hundred livres ſhall either be circulated or received in the treaſury on any account; that all holders of any ſuch aſſignats after that day ſhall be bound to bring them to the municipalities to be burnt; and that after the 1ſt of February any holder of ſuch an aſſignat ſhall be deemed a ſuſpected perſon, and expoſed to the vengeance of the Republic. This decree can be conſidered as nothing leſs than a direct act of bankruptcy; to what preciſe amount muſt have depended on the value of the aſſignats paid into the treaſury between the 14th of December 1793, the day on which the decree paſſed, and the 1ſt of January 1794, the time limited for receiving ſuch aſſignats at the treaſury. Cambon ſtates, that the gain to the Republic would be about 2,500,000l. ſterling. We may therefore at leaſt take the amount of the bankruptcy of the Republic upon his calculation.

The next proceeding which I have to ſtate is of a ſtill more extraordinary complexion: On the 24th of Auguſt 1793, a ſubſcription was opened for a loan at 4 per cent. intereſt for the purpoſe of taking up aſſignats. This loan was called by a ſingular epithet the *voluntary* loan, to contra-diſtinguiſh it from the *forced* loan, by the plan of which it is accompanied in the ſame report, although the details of that plan were not formally enacted until the 3d of September. Few or no voluntary ſubſcribers having appeared, (as might naturally be expected in a country where there is no public credit, and no ſecurity for any property, and leaſt of all for any property in the public funds,) the com-

companion of the voluntary loan was now brought forward, and a decree was paſſed, exacting from the people of France a *forced loan* of one milliard, or forty millions ſterling, being one-third of the total collective annual income of all the individuals in France according to the ſtatement of the Convention itſelf. The object of this meaſure is ſtated expreſsly to be to diminiſh the maſs of aſſignats, and to bind the rich citizen to the fate and to the ſucceſs of the Revolution. This loan is to be levied on "all income "ariſing from property in the public funds, from "private annuities, from intereſt of capital em-"ployed in commerce, in banking, or generally in "profitable buſineſs of any kind." But this is not enough: even what is called *idle capital* is not exempt. *Idle capital* is defined to be "any ſum exceed-"ing his half-yearly income, which an egotiſt may "have laid by either in his ſtrong box, or at his "banker's, or in the hands of perſons indebted to "him." This unproductive property is eſtimated to produce five per cent. intereſt, and according to that rate is to be reputed as income, and to be made liable to the tax: any profit made upon capital employed before the year 1793, is alſo to be rated at five per cent. and ſubjected to the tax. A commiſſion is appointed to aſcertain every man's income, and every man is bound to give in the name and dwelling-place of all his creditors. No intereſt is allowed upon this forced loan, and no part of it is to be repaid until the term of two years after the peace, when atteſted receipts of payments on account of the loan are to be admitted in the purchaſe of national domains. The rate of this tax is as follows: on all yearly income not exceeding a thouſand livres, or forty pounds ſterling, one-tenth is to be taken. The tax then encreaſes progreſſively one-tenth upon each one thouſand livres,

or forty pounds ſterling, until where the income reaches ten thouſand livres, or four hundred pounds ſterling, two hundred and twenty pounds are abſorded by the tax. All income *above four hundred pounds ſterling is to be taken abſolutely and entirely;* ſo that the firſt baſis of calculation on which this meaſure is founded is, that for the preſent year no man in France ſhall have an income of more than one hundred and eighty pounds *.

There are however certain deductions allowed to bachelors 40l. income free from the tax, to every married man 60l. and the *ample* allowance of forty pounds for the maintenance of his wife, and the ſame for each of his children; and all thoſe who may chuſe to take charge of an old man, or of the wife or child of a defender of the country are to be allowed the ſame addition of forty pounds free income. What may be the expence of maintaining the wife or child of a defender of the country is difficult to compute; probably the intention of this regulation was to afford

* The tax is calculated as follows, in ſterling money:

Income.		Tax.
1ſt, 40l.	——	4.
2d, 40l.	——	8.
3d, 40l.	——	12.
4th, 40l.	——	16.
5th, 40l.	——	20.
6th, 40l.	——	24.
7th, 40l.	——	28.
8th, 40l.	——	32.
9th, 40l.	——	36.
10th, 40l.	——	40.
400		220
220		
180 Remainder		

The whole ſurplus income above 400l. goes to the tax.

a pretext

a pretext to the Jacobins and to their friends for evading this grievous tax. I leave it to the Houſe to decide, what the operation of this tax muſt be upon the higher claſſes affected by it; and what relief it would be to a * man of ten, of five, or of one thouſand pounds a year who ſhould be reduced, at one blow to an income of one hundred and eighty pounds, to be allowed forty pounds for the maintenance of his wife, and the ſame ſum for each of his children. In reaſoning upon this part of the queſtion the Convention declare, that they would not have "confiſcated "the whole income beyond four hundred pounds, if "this meaſure were to be permanent; becauſe it could "never enter into their views to place any bounds to "the emulation, or to the induſtry of the people; "but it was their object, leaving to every man the "enjoyment of the fruits of his labour, to reduce to "the level of equality by † *gentle* ways thoſe for-"tunes which had riſen above it." They add, however, "that it is indeed true, that this meaſure will "be very partial in its operation; it muſt fall moſt "heavily on men of property; but they deſerve no "mercy; if they have the obſtinacy to hoard up their "unproductive capital in their coffers, they muſt

* In the model of the declaration of income annexed to the decree, the form is drawn for a married citizen of 5,800l. a year, ariſing from landed property, annuities in the funds, capital employed in commerce, in contracts with government, &c. He is ſuppoſed to ſupport his father, wife, a child, an old man, and the child of a defender of the country; he is charged for the tax the ſum of 5,420l. Remainder 380l. The payment to the forced loan does not exempt any man from the taxes which have been impoſed for ſome time on all real and perſonal property, and which are very heavy.

† Voies douces.

"ſuffer

ſuffer the penalties due to ſuch a robbery committed againſt the rights of ſociety, and againſt the beneficial circulation of caſh; for what is the injury to egotiſts in the forced loan? Let them carry their money to the voluntary loan before the month of January; it will be received in diſcharge of the ſums due on account of the forced loan, and intereſt will accrue upon it, payable at the convenience of the ſtate. In this light the forced loan is a benefit to egotiſts; although it may reſtrain their luxury for a time, it compels them to draw a profit from their idle capital; and economy is a virtue which ought above all others to be cheriſhed in a Republic."

Here, Sir, is ſuch an advantageous propoſal, as was never before made to men of property of all deſcriptions: thoſe who have large incomes ariſing from landed eſtates, property in the funds, or capital profitably employed, are *invited* to pay in the courſe of four months, nearly the whole anticipated receipt of twelve into the public treaſury on account of the Voluntary Loan, and are aſſured, that the time will come, when they ſhall receive intereſt for their money. Thoſe monied men, who from motives of prudence, have not thought fit to embark their property in the uncertain funds of a diſtracted ſtate, are alſo *invited on the ground of economy*, to pay into the treaſury on account of the voluntary loan, 5 per cent. upon that which produces them nothing at the riſk of entirely ſinking the ſum ſo advanced, and upon the faith of a precarious and illuſory promiſe, that they ſhall receive in the interval a per-centage inſufficient to indemnify them for their immediate loſs.

But if any perſon ſhould be ſo negligent of his own intereſt, and ſo forgetful of the true principles of domeſtic economy as to reject this invitation to contribute

bute all his means of preſent ſubſiſtance to the voluntary loan before the month of January, he is compelled to pay the whole to the forced loan by the month of March, without the proſpect of receiving any intereſt at all, or of being repaid his principal until the period of two years after the peace: and if he ſhould not be able to pay the ſum at which he is rated, by the month of March, his property is liable to ſeizure, and when the ſum is levied, he forfeits it abſolutely to the ſtate, and entirely loſes his right of repayment: Thus (ſay the Commiſſioners of Finance in their report on this ſubject) "The forced "loan allies itſelf with the voluntary loan; thus theſe "two ſalutary operations are intimately mixed and "blended together, and reciprocally ſupport each "other. Such are the meaſures which ought to date "their origin from the epoch of a conſtitution, which "conſecrates and gaurantees the true principles of ſo-"ciety. The legiſlators have recorded in the firſt "article of their decree upon the forced loan their "homage to the conſtitutional principle of reſpect for "property; for by this tax they only take every "man's income, and by allowing him to retain his "capital they leave him all that he poſſeſſed in reality "before." Theſe, Sir, are the gentle ways of equality; theſe are the leſſons by which the people of France have learned the intimate and natural alliance between compulſion and conſent, and this is the nature of that homage which the revolutionary government has paid to the rights of property in this great financial operation. Notwithſtanding that the public debt had been guaranteed by the conſtitution of the 10th of Auguſt, 1793, the funds *, are by this ſcheme

* The forced and voluntary loans were accompanied by a decree for conſolidating the public debt; this was done by compelling all the public creditors to enter their demands in one book, and by confounding every claſs of them, ſo that the order and priority of their claims

ſcheme ſubjected to tax; the fundamental principle of the whole commercial ſyſtem, which conſiſts in the application of the profits of one year to ſupport the enterprizes of the next, is overturned at one blow by this violent confiſcation of ſo large a proportion of the annual income ariſing from profitable capital. The injuſtice and miſchief of this project in its general operation on other branches of property have ſufficiently appeared, in explaining the regulations and doctrines on which the decree is founded. The effects of ſo ſudden and violent a reduction of income in all the claſſes above 400l. a year, muſt extend equally to all the lower claſſes * alſo; it muſt be as ſeverely felt by the poor, as by the rich who are the immediate objects of the exaction. All the ſervants, dependants, tradeſmen, workmen or labourers, who have been uſed to draw their maintenance either from the benevolence, or from the neceſſary demands of ſuch perſons of property, muſt inſtantly be ruined by the failure of that ſource from which they derive their only means of ſubſiſtance. The only juſt obſervation in the whole courſe of the voluminous reports on this meaſure is, *that it is not of a nature to be renewed*; it is evident, that whatever might be its produce in the firſt year, ſuch muſt be its rapid and ruinous effects,

claims on the ſtate might not be diſtinguiſhed hereafter. Thus it was ſaid "the debt will be *Republicaniſed*," and it is added, "this operation of *republicaniſing* the debt will "facilitate the means of *taxing it*;" theſe meaſures together, namely the voluntary loan, the forced loan, the republican debt, and the taxed funds are called by the commiſſioners "a *Jubilee of Revolutionary Finance*."

* By referring to the ſcale of this tax it will be ſeen, that the diſtreſs would be ſcarcely leſs felt by the middle ranks of ſociety, conſiſting of perſons of 400l. a year, and of an income below that ſum; it is remarkable that in the firſt plan for the forced loan laid before the Convention, it was propoſed to exempt from the tax all income below 400l. a year; the plan was extended in conſequence of a report from the Commiſſioners of Finance ſtating, that ſuch an exemption would reduce the produce of the tax ſo conſiderably, as to render it wholly inſufficient for the purpoſes of the government.

that even if it were to be renewed in another year, it could not be productive.

It was ſtated by Cambon, late in the month of November, that although this tax had been collected at Paris, where the movement of terror may be ſuppoſed to be moſt active, very little had been received in the ſeveral departments.

The means which have been employed for enforcing this and other extortions, I ſhall have occaſion to conſider preſently, as well as the total amount of the ſums which they are ſaid to have brought into the national treaſury.

In the ſame ſpirit with this general forced loan, local loans have been levied in different parts of the republic, which however have not on that account been exempted from the general contributions. At Bourdeaux, during the regeneration of that city, large ſums were raiſed in order to puniſh, what is ſtyled, the *malevolence of the rich, and the crime of egotiſm;* a crime which, as nearly as any definition of it can be collected from the proceedings of the Convention, conſiſts in the poſſeſſion of property, and the application of it to the uſe of the poſſeſſor, or to any other purpoſes than thoſe which the rapine of the preſent tyrants of France is pleaſed to preſcribe. At Straſburg, a loan of twenty millions of livres, (nearly a million ſterling) was levied excluſively upon the rich, by St. Juſt, one of the National Commiſſioners. Some proceedings of this nature were ſo violent as to have been made matter of complaint in the Convention. It was ſtated to the Convention on the 30th of September, that one of the National Commiſſioners in the department of Loiret, impoſed arbitrary taxes unauthorized by law upon the citizens. A particular caſe was adduced, and a motion was made that the taxes ſo impoſed ſhould be repealed, and the commiſſioner reprimanded. It was anſwered, that the Convention would not embarraſs the proceedings of their com-

miſſioners for the ſake of ariſtocrats and counter-revolutioniſts; and the Convention accordingly, upon a ſpecial caſe ſtated of a tax levied without authority of law by the arbitrary power of one of their own commiſſioners, ſtifled all enquiry, and paſſed to the order of the day. Complaint having been afterwards made that the Revolutionary taxes were not paid into the public treaſury, it was decreed, that the produce of all taxes levied upon citizens in any part of the republic by incompetent authority ſhould be paid into the public treaſury; and that thoſe who had collected ſuch taxes in the ſeveral departments ſhould be accountable to the public for the ſums which they have received. This decree contained no proviſion whatever for refunding any part of theſe illegal exactions to the perſons aggrieved, while it gave the ſanction of the convention to ſuch unwarrantable oppreſſion, by applying the profits ariſing from it to the uſe of the State as a regular and legitimate article of revenue.

Such being their mode of diminiſhing the maſs of circulating aſſignats, the next leading branch of their financial ſyſtem was the effort made for procuring gold and ſilver. It will appear rather extraordinary to the Houſe, that the firſt meaſure taken with this view ſhould have been the proſcription of thoſe metals. A letter is received from Fouché, commiſſioner in the central and weſtern departments, in which you may perceive the firſt ſymptoms of a growing indignation againſt gold and ſilver. He ſays, "Gold and "ſilver have been the cauſes of all the calamities of "the republic: I know not by what weak complai-"ſance thoſe metals are ſtill ſuffered to remain in "the hands of ſuſpected perſons; let us degrade "and villify gold and ſilver, let us drag thoſe deities "of monarchy in the dirt, and eſtabliſh the worſhip

"of

" of the auſtere virtues of a republic." He however adds, " I ſend you ſeventeen cheſts filled with " gold, ſilver, and plate of all ſorts, the ſpoil of " churches and caſtles: you will ſee with peculiar " pleaſure two beautiful croziers, and a ducal coronet " of ſilver gilt."

This ingenious idea of vilifying and degrading valuable effects by ſeizing them for the uſe of the Revolutionary Government, is not loſt upon the French Miniſter of finance. A few days after the receipt of this letter, a citizen appears at the bar, and deſires to be permitted to exchange certain pieces of gold and ſilver bearing the image of the tyrant for republican paper. This patriotic and diſintereſted offer, as you may imagine, was gladly accepted by the convention; but upon a motion being made, that honourable mention of this tranſaction ſhould be inſerted in the votes, the Chancellor of the Exchequer riſes with the utmoſt indignation to oppoſe ſo monſtrous a propoſition—he delivers a moſt eloquent and vehement invective againſt gold and ſilver; he ſays, " In a ſhort time the world " will be too happy if we ſhould deign to receive " pieces of metal bearing the effigy of tyrants in ex- " change for Republican aſſignats; already the whole " nation rejects and deſpiſes thoſe corrupting metals, " which tyrants originally brought from America for " the ſole purpoſe of enſlaving us. I have in con- " templation the plan of a ſumptuary law, by which " I will drive that vile dung once more into the bow- " els of the earth."

What was the ſumptuary law by which the Chancellor of the Exchequer propoſed to accompliſh this ſalutary reform? Here is that excellent law: " All " gold and ſilver metal, in ſpecie or plate, all jewels, " gold and ſilver lace, or valuable effects which ſhall " be diſcovered *buried in the earth*, or concealed in " cellars, walls, rubbiſh, floors, or pavements, hearths,

" or chimnies, or *in any ſecret place, ſhall be ſeized* " *and confiſcated for the uſe of the Republic;* and the " informer ſhall receive a twentieth part of the value " of whatever he ſhall diſcover, to be paid in aſſig- " nats." Concealment alone is the crime on which this law attaches, without even any of the ordinary pretences of ariſtocracy or diſaffection. In conſequence of this decree, every place in which it was poſſible to conceal treaſure is ſearched with the utmoſt rigour; the privacy of every houſe is violated; every cellar and garden is dug up; and the Chancellor of the Exchequer with the moſt unrelenting ſpirit of perſecution purſues the objects of his hatred and contempt even to the bowels of the earth, where he had threatened to drive them.

About the ſame time a law was paſſed appointing Commiſſioners for receiving, on behalf of the nation, the gold and ſilver plate, and every other valuable article which had been conſecrated to the uſe of religious worſhip in any part of the country. This leads me to a moſt diſtinguiſhed feature of the Revolutionary Government; I mean the formal abolition of religion. It may appear extraordinary that I ſhould introduce in this part of the argument a ſubject which from its ſerious and awful nature might ſeem to demand a ſeparate and diſtinct conſideration. But in order to ſhew the ſyſtem which I am deſcribing in its true colours, I am compelled even in the diſtribution of this detail to follow the courſe of the extravagant follies, and of the eccentric crimes which diſtinguiſh the Revolutionary government, not more by their abſurdity and magnitude, than by their novelty and ſingularity; for this reaſon I muſt claſs the abolition of religion under the head of revenue. The main object of this meaſure was certainly to obtain a new reſource by ſeizing the ſalaries of the clergy, and by plundering the ornaments of the churches. There

was

was however another collateral object inſeparably connected with the firſt, namely, to ſtrengthen the foundations of the Revolutionary Government, and to reconcile the minds of the people to the crimes of their tyrants by deſtroying the firſt elements of all moral principle, by diſſolving the firmeſt bond of civil ſociety, and by ſubverting the ſtrongeſt bulwark of lawful authority.

The plan for the accompliſhment of theſe combined objects was deliberate and ſyſtematic, and purſued from beginning to end with the utmoſt regularity, conſiſtency, and vigour. The ground-work of this ſcheme had indeed been long laid; it may be traced in the ſeizure of the church-lands, in the oath exacted from the clergy by the civil conſtitution of 1792, and in the perſecution and maſſacre of thoſe who had the virtue and courage to reject that oath, and to ſacrifice their fortunes, and expoſe their lives, for the ſake of the eſtabliſhed religion. The fury of that perſecution had been nearly exhauſted before the 31ſt of May, and the Revolutionary Government found no prieſts in poſſeſſion of ſalaries from the State, but thoſe who had ſubmitted to the conſtitutional oath. The firſt ſtep taken was, to reduce the ſalaries of the prieſts to an allowance ſcarcely ſufficient for their ſubſiſtance. Soon after, all diſguiſe was thrown off, and the Convention on the one hand excited the people by a public addreſs to deſpiſe their clergy as an uſeleſs and unneceſſary burthen, and on the other openly propoſed rewards to ſuch prieſts as ſhould voluntarily renounce not their ſalaries only, but the duties of their ſacred office. The Commiſſioners in the ſeveral departments received inſtructions to enlighten the public mind, and to encourage the abdication of the clergy. Some extracts from the addreſſes of the clergy, and from the letters of the National Commiſſioners will beſt explain the true ſpirit of theſe proceedings: an addreſs

dated

dated the 30th of October from the Curate of Villos de Luchon ſays, " Legiſlators, I come to make a pub-
" lic confeſſion, and to declare my repentance. Why
" ſhould we ſpare eſtabliſhed prejudices? For my part,
" I believe that no religion in any country in the
" world is founded in truth. I believe that all the
" various religions in the world are deſcended from
" the ſame parents; they are all the daughters of
" Pride and Ignorance. I believe that Heaven is
" nothing more than the happineſs which attends
" virtue on earth. I render this ſolemn homage to
" Truth. Univerſal morality is become my goſpel;
" and henceforth I mean to draw my texts from
" thence alone, and to preach in no other cauſe than
" that of liberty, and of my country. Fanaticiſm
" will not now liſten to me; but by habits of truth
" men will be converted to reaſon; and we may hope
" that ſoon prieſts of all religions will comprehend
" the triumph of philoſophy and of the liberty of na-
" tions, and acknowledge the difference between the
" functions of the prieſthood and the duties of honeſty
" and virtue." Upon receiving this addreſs, the Convention decrees, " that all ſimilar addreſſes of
" renunciation of the eccleſiaſtical character, and of
" the functions relating to it ſhall be lodged with the
" Committee of Public Inſtruction, which is ordered
" to take effectual meaſures for rendering all ſuch
" public acts uſeful to the hiſtory of the revolution,
" and to the public education." This proceeding does not ſatisfy the eagerneſs of Thuriot: he obſerves, that " he has no doubt that the new creed will
" ſoon efface all memory of the old:" But in order that truth may be carried into every part of the republic with more promptitude and effect, he moves,
" that all ſimilar letters ſhould be tranſlated into all
" the provincial idioms." Not ſatisfied even with the hope of propagating theſe liberal doctrines in the provinces,

vinces, he carries his benevolence beyond the limits of France. He ſays, " It is not ſufficient to enlighten " one part of Europe: this is a caſe in which it may " be right to ſoften the rigour of the French laws " reſpecting foreigners: it ſhould be the duty of the " Convention to aſſume the honourable office of diſ- " fuſing truth over the whole earth." And upon his motion it is decreed, " that all renunciations of the " functions of religion ſhall be tranſlated into all fo- " reign languages." In the ſame month the Archbiſhop of Paris enters the Convention, accompanied by a ſolemn proceſſion of his Vicars, and by ſeveral curates of Paris: he makes a ſpeech, in which he renounces the prieſthood in his own name, and in the name of all his attendants; and he declares, that he does it, " becauſe he is convinced that no national " worſhip ſhould be tolerated, excepting the worſhip " of Liberty and Equality." The votes of the Convention mention, that the archbiſhop and his curates were received and embraced with tranſport by the whole Convention; and that the archbiſhop was ſolemnly preſented with a red cap: before he left the Convention ſeveral members who were clergymen imitated his example, by adopting his creed. The day concludes with a ſpeech from Julien of Toulouſe, a Member of the Convention, and a Miniſter of the Proteſtant Church: he ſays, " For twenty years I " have exerciſed the functions of a Proteſtant Mi- " niſter; I declare that I renounce them for ever. " In every religion there is more or leſs of quackery " (great applauſes). It is glorious to be able to make " this declaration under the auſpices of reaſon, of " philoſophy, and of that ſublime conſtitution which " has already overturned the errors of Superſtition " and Monarchy in France, and which now prepares " a ſimilar fate for all foreign tyrannies. I declare " that I will no longer enter into any other temple

" than

" than the Sanctuary of the Laws ; that I will ac-
" knowledge no other God than Liberty, no other
" worſhip than that of my country, no other Goſpel
" than the Republican Conſtitution : ſuch is my pro-
" feſſion of moral and political faith. I ſhall ceaſe to
" be a Miniſter of the Proteſtant Church ; but I ſhall
" think myſelf equally bound to adviſe, exhort, and
" inſtruct my fellow citizens in the Jacobin Clubs,
" and in the public ſquares ; there I will preach, and
" there I will inſpire them with the love of liberty and
" equality : I will ſoon lay upon the table my letters
" of ordination, of which I hope you will have the
" kindneſs to make an Auto da Fè." The letters of the National Commiſſioners are full of the ſame zeal : Lequinio and Laignelot, Deputies of the Convention, write to that Aſſembly, from Rochefort on the 2d of ſame month, in theſe words : " We paſs from miracle
" to miracle : ſoon our only regret will be that no
" more miracles remain to be performed. Eight
" Prieſts of the Catholic perſuaſion, and one Miniſter
" of the Proteſtant Church unfrocked themſelves on
" the day of the laſt decade in preſence of the whole
" people in the Temple of Truth, heretofore called
" the Pariſh Church of this Town : they abjured the
" errors which they had ſo long taught, and they
" ſwore henceforth to teach nothing but the great
" principles of morality, and of ſound philoſophy ;
" to preach againſt all tyrannies political and religi-
" ous, and at length to diſplay the light of reaſon to
" mankind. The whole people, Proteſtants and Ca-
" tholics, ſwore to forget their ancient ſuperſtition. In
" this town there will no longer exiſt more than one
" mode of preaching morality ; there will exiſt but
" one temple, that of Truth : but one repoſitory for
" the remains of the dead whoſe reſurrection has been
" perpetually preached by Superſtition for the torment
" of the living. The Rights of Man and ſeveral other

" Con-

" Conſtitutional Laws are to be ſubſtituted in the " room of the myſterious ornaments of the Churches. " We thought it right to recompenſe the courage of " theſe philoſophical Prieſts, who have been the firſt to " ſhake off the yoke of Superſtition: We have ac- " cordingly granted to each of them for their lives a " penſion of fifty pounds a year. Every thing goes " on ſmoothly here: the people of their own accord " approach the torch of Reaſon, which we hold up to " them with an air of mildneſs and fraternity. The " Revolutionary Tribunal, which we have eſtabliſhed " quickens the motions of the Ariſtocrats; and the " Guillotine ſtrikes the heads of traitors to the " ground."

The ſame commiſſioners in another letter ſay, " The people of Rochefort triumph over all preju- " dices; they now exchange their gold for aſſignats; " and we have no doubt that their example will ſoon be " followed throughout all France; and that ſoon the " whole people renouncing the ancient habits which " they had contracted under the Royal Government, " will demand the ſuppreſſion of all money in ſpecie, " as they have already deſtroyed every remnant of " Preſbyterian mummery. We announce to you " with great ſatisfaction, that the popular ſociety of " Rochefort has ſelected from its own body ſeveral " preachers of morality, who are gone upon a vicarial " miſſion into the villages and hamlets of the neigh- " bouring diſtrict. We are informed that theſe Apoſ- " tles of reaſon make proſelytes wherever they go. " If this meaſure had been adopted at the commence- " ment of the Revolution, we ſhould never have " heard of La Vendèe.

Boiſſet, another commiſſioner, gives an account of his operations in the departments of Ardêche, la Drôme, du Gard, and Herault. He ſays, " Fanaticiſm " is deſtroyed; Catholics and Proteſtants forgetting

" their

" their former animoſities unite in the ſame worſhip,
" that of liberty and the laws. The altars of Chriſ-
" tianity are replaced by altars more holy. The
" whole people will ſoon aſſemble before them, each
" Decade to render homage to Liberty."

Wherever the prieſts could not be induced by corruption to abjure their profeſſion; wherever the people did not willingly approach the Torch of reaſon and truth, the moſt rigorous meaſures of perſecution were adopted. Dumont, one of the National Commiſſioners, announces to the Convention, " that, in or-
" der to deſtroy Fanaticiſm he arreſts all prieſts who
" celebrate religious ceremonies on Sundays." He adds, " that he includes all thoſe monſters called
" prieſts in his general liſt of proſcription; and that
" he has made ſeveral captures of thoſe infamous bi-
" gots." This letter was greatly applauded in the Convention. But the zeal of the Municipality of Paris was moſt eminently diſtinguiſhed in every period of this impious and cruel perſecution. The conduct of that body merits peculiar attention, not only becauſe it had ſo large a ſhare in producing the revolution of the 31ſt of May, but becauſe it is likely to have an equal influence in any future convulſion.

The Municipality of Paris decreed, " that all churches and temples of religious worſhip of what-
" ever denomination exiſting at Paris ſhould be in-
" ſtantly ſhut; that the prieſts and miniſters of the
" different religions ſhould be reſpoſible for any com-
" motions on account of religion which might happen
" in conſequence of this decree; that any perſon
" requiring the opening of a chruch or temple for the
" celebration of religious worſhip of any kind ſhould
" be put under arreſt as a ſuſpected perſon; and that
" the revolutionary committees ſhould be invited to
" keep a watchful eye over the Clergy of every de-
" nomination."

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In conſequence of this decree the cathedral church of Notre Dame at Paris, and all the pariſh churches were ſhut up for ſome time, until they ſhould be regenerated and purified from every taint of Chriſtianity. The cathedral church was formally dedicated to reaſon and truth by a decree of the convention, paſſed at the inſtance of the Municipality of Paris; other churches underwent a ſimilar purification: many were dedicated to reaſon, many to truth, ſome to probity and the nation, ſome to Liberty and Equality, but all without exception were alienated from the ſervice of God.

Nor was it merely againſt Chriſtianity that theſe efforts were directed: on the 12th of November a Jewiſh Rabbi is introduced into the Council General of the Commons of Paris; he makes an offering of the ornaments of religious worſhip employed in his ſynagogue; they are received with the warmeſt applauſe; and this intereſting ſcene is recorded in the following words:

"The Council General in teſtimony of its ſenſe "of the diſintereſted conduct of the citizen Benjamin "Jacob heretofore a Jew, reſolves, that civic mention "ſhall be made of his name in their votes. On this "occaſion the Members of the Council vied with "each other in giving the fraternal kiſs to this reſ-"pectable philoſopher."

On the ſame day a report was received from the popular ſociety of the ſection of the Muſeum, announcing that they had "executed juſtice upon all the "books of ſuperſtition and falſehood; that brevi-"aries, miſſals, legends, together with the old and "new Teſtament, had expiated in the fire the follies "which they had occaſioned among mankind." A book of regiſtry was opened at the town hall, for receiving the declarations of thoſe who wiſhed to give proofs of their civiſm by abjuring the functions of miniſter of any ſect of any religion. All this paſſed at

Paris under the eye of the convention, not only without their oppoſition, but with their formal approbation and concurrence.

In order to take the lead in completing the ſalutary work in which they had hitherto borne ſo active a part, the council General of Paris decreed, "That "a civic feaſt ſhould be celebrated in the heretofore "cathedral church, and that a patriotic hymn ſhould "be chaunted before a ſtatue of Liberty, to be e-"rected in the place of the heretofore Holy Virgin."

You remember the circumſtances of that extravagant orgy to which this decree was the prelude; you remember the introduction of the Goddeſs of Reaſon into the convention, the fraternal ardor with which ſhe was embraced by the Preſident in the chair, by the Secretaries at the table, and by all the Members preſent, and the piety with which ſhe was afterwards publicly worſhipped by the whole legiſlature of France in the cathedral church, or (to uſe their own language) in the regenerated Temple of Reaſon and Truth: there the Archbiſhop of Paris officiated in his new character, with a read cap on his head, and a pike in his hand; and with that ſacred weapon, which he bore as the ſymbol of the united deities of Reaſon and Liberty, having deſtroyed or defaced whatever emblems of the Chriſtian religion had eſcaped the firſt purification of the regenerated Temple, he terminated this auſpicious ceremony by placing the buſt of the regicide Marat on the altar of God. To perpetuate the memory of this ſolemn act and celebrity of atheiſm, the Convention voted, that a coloſſal ſtatue ſhould be erected upon the ruins of all the emblems of monarchy and religion. The impiety of the ſections of Paris ſeems to have received new vigour from this auguſt ceremony. A deputation from the ſection of Unity was ſoon after received in the convention; the deputies were laden with the ſpoil of one of the richeſt churches at Paris; to this acceptable offering they added an addreſs full of energy, in which they congratulated the Legiſla-

ture, " that reaſon had gained ſo great a victory ove " ſuperſtition; that a religion of error and of blood " was annihilated; a religion, which for eighteen " centuries had occaſioned nothing but evils upon " earth; and yet it was pretended to be of divine ori- " gin!"

Here the addreſs enumerated ſeveral different epochs of Chriſtianity, in which murders and maſſacres have been committed. It continued in theſe words:

" Such are the works, ſuch are the trophies of this " religion; may it be obliterated from the face of the " earth! happineſs will then return; mankind will " live like friends and brothers: from this auſpicious " moment hiſtory, whoſe painful taſk has hitherto " been to record the crimes of religion, ſhall have " nothing to commemorate but virtue and happineſs. " We ſwear that we will tolerate no other worſhip " than that of Reaſon, Liberty, Equality, and the " Republic." It appears by the votes, *that the whole Convention joined in this oath*; and the Preſident made the following reply to the addreſs:

" In a ſingle moment you have annihilated the me- " mory of eighteen centuries of error; your philo- " ſophy has offered to reaſon a ſacrifice worthy of her " acceptance, and fit to proceed from a true republican " ſpirit. The aſſembly receives your offering and " your oath in the name of the country."

Theſe proceedings in the convention and Municipality were ſeconded by *good writings*, induſtriouſly circulated among the people by the means ordinarily employed for the propagation of every favourite doctrine.

In one of them appears the true ſpirit and principle of this reform: it is there maintained in plain and direct terms, " That provided the idea of a Supreme Being be nothing more than a philoſophical abſtraction, a guide to the imagination in the purſuit of cauſes and effects, a reſting-place for the curioſity of enquiring minds, a notion merely ſpeculative, and

from which no practical conſequences are to be applied to human life, there is no great danger in ſuch "an idea: but if it is to be made the foundation of "morality; if it is to be accompanied by the ſup-"poſition, that there exiſts a God who preſides o-"ver the affairs of the world, and rewards or puniſhes "men for their actions on earth according to ſome "principle of retributive juſtice, there can be no opini-"on more prejudicial to the intereſts of ſociety. That "the idea of a ſupreme Deity is a deſpotic idea, and "muſt be ſo in all times; that mankind can never be "really liberated or republicaniſed, ſo long as they "ſhall preſerve ſuch a notion; that beings who adore "an inviſible maſter will eaſily believe that he may "accompliſh his ends by earthly agents; and reaſon-"ing by analogy, they muſt conclude the neceſſity of "ſome ſyſtem of ranks and orders of ſociety, and fi-"nally of ſome regular government among mankind; "and thus the ſervitude of the underſtanding will en-"ſlave every moral and political principle."

From the mouths of the principal actors in this extraordinary ſcene I have brought before you the ſcope and aim of their deſign: It was not (as we have been told on this day) to purify their own eſtabliſhed mode of worſhip, and to clear it from the errors of the Church of Rome. Proteſtants were invited to unite with Catholics in the extinction of the Proteſtant as well as of the Catholic religion; Proteſtants as well as Catholics were denied the liberty of aſſembling for the purpoſe of public worſhip; Proteſtant as well as Catholic churches were ſhut up; and thoſe who dared to celebrate religious worſhip of any kind were arreſted, and treated as ſuſpected perſons. Chriſtianity was ſtigmatiſed through the organ of the preſident of the convention, amidſt the applauſes of the whole audience as a ſyſtem of murder and maſſacre, which could not be tolerated by the humanity of a revolutionary government. The Old and New Teſtament were publickly burnt as prohibited books. Nor was

it even to Chriſtianity of any denomination, that their hatred was confined. Even Jews were involved in this comprehenſive plan; their ornaments of publiv worſhip were plundered, and their vows of irreligion recorded with enthuſiaſm. The rigour of the laws reſpecting foreigners was relaxed, in order that impiety might be univerſally propagated for the general benefit of all mankind. The exiſtence of a future ſtate was openly denied, and modes of burial deviſed for the expreſs purpoſe of repreſenting to the minds of the people, that death was nothing more than an everlaſting ſleep; and to complete the whole project, doctrines were publicly circulated under the eye of the government maintaining, that the exiſtence of a ſupreme God was an idea inconſiſtent with the liberty of man. And yet a noble Earl * in this debate has lamented, that the French government ſhould have met with any interruption in their laudable efforts for the deſtruction of deſpotiſm and ſuperſtition! I truſt thoſe expreſſions were inconſiderately uſed: we are not yet ſufficiently enlightened in this Houſe to conſider an attack againſt Chriſtianity, and even againſt the belief and worſhip of a God, as a laudable effort to deſtroy ſuperſtition. So very little has the noble Earl examined this ſubject, that the moſt ſtriking feature of this whole ſyſtem has entirely eſcaped his obſervation. It is a circumſtance well deſerving of attention, that as the anarchy which prevails in France is accompanied by all the evils of deſpotiſm, ſo their atheiſm bears all the moſt odious features of ſuperſtition. Their enthuſiaſtic worſhip of thoſe abſtract ideas of liberty and equality which they have ſubſtituted in the place of God, their bigotted infidelity, their intolerant zeal for the propagation of atheiſm, and their furious ſpirit of perſecution againſt every mode of religious worſhip have not been ſurpaſſed, and have ſeldom been equalled in the moſt ſanguinary periods in which miſguided and fanatical ſuperſtition has ever diſgraced the cauſe of religion. (* *Lord Wycombe.*)

But ſince the noble Earl has, it ſeems, connected theſe impious proceedings with certain political principles, I beg his attention to what I ſhall now offer on that ſubject, with the view of ſhewing to the Houſe the intimate alliance between all the parts of the French ſyſtem, and the various modes in which they all mutually aid and co-operate with each other.

The Abbe Syeyes, the author of the original declaration of rights, and one of the Committee for framing the Conſtitution of the 10th of Auguſt 1793, in making his ſolemn abjuration of religion, explains to the Convention the cauſe and the progreſs of his converſion; he ſays, "my wiſhes have long deſired this "triumph of Reaſon over Superſtition. I repeat now "what I have always felt, and often declared, that I "know no other worſhip than that of Liberty and "Equality, no other religion than the love of Humanity, and of my country. When the vigour of my "underſtanding firſt caſt off the melancholy preju-"dices by which my youth had been afflicted, at that "moment the energy of inſurrection entered into "my heart. If ſince that time I have ſubmitted to "bear the chains of the church, it has been under the "preſſure of the ſame force which equally ſubjected "all free ſpirits to the chains of the monarchy. The "day of the revolution neceſſarily diſſolved all thoſe "odious bonds."

In one and the ſame moment the mind of this great man was touched by the benignant influence of atheiſm and by the ſacred ſpirit of inſurrection, and was at once miraculouſly relieved from all ſenſe of civil obedience to his King, and of religious duty to his God. Never was ſo comprehenſive a ſyſtem unfolded to the world by an expoſition ſo clear, ſo unequivocal, and ſo compendious. The noble Earl and the Houſe may learn from theſe few words, whether it was ſuperſtition or religion, deſpotiſm or monarchy, againſt which the violence of the Jacobin faction was levelled, and why they thought atheiſm the moſt ſecure foundation on which a Revolutionary government could be eſtabliſhed.

Such were the proceedings by which the abolition of religion was attempted in France: But for the honour of human nature, they did not anſwer the expectations of thoſe who had digeſted the plan, and had been moſt active in providing the means for its execution. Diſciplined in crimes, and accuſtomed to every ſcene of rapine, injuſtice, and cruelty, the people of France could not yet be induced to renounce for ever the conſolations of religion. The provinces almoſt without exception were ſcandalized at the audacious profligacy of the government, and even at Paris the ſtrongeſt ſymptoms of the ſame ſentiment appeared. Robeſpierre himſelf was alarmed; and the Jacobin Club thought it prudent to declare, that under all the exiſting circumſtances they admitted the idea of a God. Apprehenſions were entertained that the ſalutary movement of terror might take a new direction, and that the order of the day might be enforced againſt the government itſelf. At length, amidſt the diſcontents of the people, who claimed aloud the free exerciſe of religious worſhip guaranteed to them by the Conſtitution, after many ſtruggles and many unſucceſsful evaſions, ſlow, and reluctant, and ambiguous, forth comes the repentance of the Convention! Even in their repentance they ſtill betray their affection for their crime, and their eager hope of renewing it under more propitious circumſtances: They are compelled to tolerate religious worſhip, and to forbid the repetition of thoſe violences, which had been exerciſed to cruſh it in every part of the country; but in the ſame decree they declare, that they do not mean "to furniſh a pretext for the diſturbance of "patriots, or to check the aſpiring flight of the pub-"lic mind; they invite citizens to abſtain from all "religious diſcuſſions, and to employ themſelves "wholly in the contemplation of the good of their "country." Upon farther reflection they add, "that "they do not mean to diſapprove of the meaſures ta-"ken by their Commiſſioners in the ſeveral depart-

" ments, *to aid the people in the deſtruction of Fanati-*
" *ciſm.*" This laſt reſolution ſanctions the impriſonment and proſcription of the clergy, the ſhutting up and ſubſequent profanation of churches of all religions, the arts and menaces employed to induce Catholics and Proteſtants to abjure Chriſtianity, the eſtabliſhment of new forms of burial, in which the exiſtence of a future ſtate is ſolemnly denied, and all the acts of oppreſſion and impiety which I have detailed to the Houſe. Thus their very repentance furniſhes the moſt inconteſtable proof of the real ſcope of their original deſign, of the extent to which it had been carried in practice, and of their future intentions, if by time and aſſiduity they ſhall be able to eradicate from the public mind that natural inſtinct which proved an inſuperable obſtacle to the ſucceſs of their firſt attempt. Having thus endeavoured to juſtify themſelves in the eyes of France, they felt that a Government, which openly overturned the fundamental principles of all religion, muſt become an object of alarm and abhorrence to every foreign nation: their next ſtep therefore was to endeavour to vindicate their conduct to all Europe; and with that view Robeſpierre drew up an anſwer, (as he ſtyles it,) to the Manifeſtoes of all Kings, in which he refutes in the triumphant manner the charge of irreligion which had been alledged againſt the Revolutionary Government. He ſays, " We are accuſed of " having declared war " againſt Heaven itſelf: But what people ever offered " a more pure worſhip to a Supreme Being? The " death-warrant of tyrants lay dormant and forgotten " in the timid breaſts of men; we called it forth; we " executed it; to puniſh Kings is to honour God." Here, then, is their creed publicly proclaimed in the face of all Europe: in the murder of their innocent King is comprized the whole principle and practice of their religion, their ſole profeſſion of faith, and their eſtabliſhed mode of worſhip: a profeſſion of faith, and a mode of worſhip worthy only of thoſe who have placed the buſt of Marat on the Altar of God!

To return to the obſervations which have led me to this digreſſion, I muſt remark, that while the deteſtable project of aboliſhing religion has failed of its propoſed effect upon the minds of the people, it does not appear to have been much more ſucceſsful as a meaſure of revenue; there is every reaſon to believe that it has not been productive of any conſiderable reſource. Although the churches were plundered of all the articles of value which could be found in them, yet, when it is recollected that many of the richeſt ornaments of the churches had been ſent into the public treaſury previous to the 10th of Auguſt 1792, under the name of Patriotic Gifts, a large deduction muſt be made from what might have been ſuppoſed to be the amount of this reſource. In addition to this circumſtance Cambon ſtates, that little or none of the church plate had reached the public treaſury, having been pillaged by thoſe whoſe zeal had been the moſt forward in promoting the worſhip of Reaſon, Truth, *Probity*, and the Nation. In all probability the principal financial advantage of this meaſure is to be found in the reduction of the ſalaries of the clergy.

I will now recapitulate the leading branches of the revenue of the Revolutionary Government for the preſent year. The tax upon all yearly income below the value of four hundred pounds, and the ſeizure of all yearly income above that ſum, including a tax upon the funds, upon commercial capital of every deſcription, upon private debts, and upon all money not laid out at intereſt; Arbitrary local loans levied upon the egotiſm of property, and the malevolence of wealth; Taxes raiſed by incompetent authority; The confiſcation of all concealed property; and The abolition of religion: to this liſt might be added the reve-

nue arising from their ſyſtem of criminal juſtice, from their violations of perſonal freedom, and collaterally, from their regulations for the deſtruction of agriculture and commerce, and for the maintenance of their army; theſe will be more properly conſidered under their diſtinct heads. Various accounts have been given of the ſum in ſpecie brought into the Treaſury by theſe exactions: it has been aſſerted to be fifteen millions ſterling. Even admitting the truth of ſuch a rumour, when we compare this ſum with a monthly expenditure of eighteen millions * ſterling, it will appear inconſiderable; and it muſt not be forgotten, that the means, which have been employed to procure it, are by the Convention itſelf admitted to be of a nature not to be renewed.†

I now come to mention the regulations of this government reſpecting agriculture, commerce, and internal trade, which are nearly connected both in principle and effect with their ſyſtem of revenue: a few examples will be ſufficient to give you an idea of the ſpirit of the whole. The depreciation of aſſignats, and the general diſtreſs of the country

* By an account laid before the Convention, on the 10th of January, 1794, it appears, that notwithſtanding all the extortion, fraud and outrage committed for the purpoſe of obtaining revenue, the deficiency between the receipt and expenditure of the month of Frimaire ending the 20th of December 1793, was no leſs a ſum than 275 millions of livres; a deficiency of eleven millions ſterling between the receipt and expenditure of a ſingle month! Paper was actually created and iſſued in that one month to this enormous amount.

† The French Miniſter of Finance has boaſted that his aſſignats were at par; but the laws which have been paſſed for puniſhing with long impriſonment any perſon who takes, gives, or offers aſſignats under par, and the laws for preventing the circulation of ſpecie, and compelling every man to declare the quantity in his poſſeſſion, ſufficiently account for this circumſtance.

having

having greatly raiſed the price of all the neceſſaries of life, the expence of maintaining the military force became ſo heavy, that the Government was compelled to reſort to ſomething beyond the extraordinary projects of revenue, which I have enumerated. The price of the articles, which may be claſſed under the head of neceſſaries of life in France, was upon an average about two-thirds higher in the year 1793, than it had been in the year 1790; in many caſes the encreaſe was infinitely greater;* the price of labour of every kind had riſen in the ſame proportion. On the 29th of September the Convention paſſed a decree to the following effect: "All articles enumerated † are to "be ſold at fixed prices, one-third above the cur-"rent price in 1790. All perſons who ſhall buy "or ſell any of the articles enumerated at a price

* In the month of Auguſt laſt, Woollens had riſen about two-thirds; Linens, cent. per cent. Leather and Shoes about 80 per cent. Soap and Candles two-thirds; Sugar from 20 ſols per lb. to 5 livres 10 ſols, and in the provinces 10 livres. In all the Provinces the diſtreſs was much greater than at Paris, which city under a particular law has been for ſome time paſt ſupplied by exactions from the neighbouring country.

† Articles of which the price is fixed by the law of the Maximum.

Freſh Meat	Salt Meat and Bacon	Linen
Sweet Oil	Cattle	Butter
Wine	Brandy	Salt Fiſh
Cyder	Beer	Vinegar
Charcoal	Coal	Wood for fuel
Woollens	Train Oil	Tallow candles,
Pearl Aſhes	Sugar	Salt
Paper	Leather	Honey
Braſs	Lead	Iron
Copper	Hemp	Steel
Woollen Stuffs	Kelp	Flax
Cole and Rape ſeed		

All raw materials of manufacture.
Wooden ſhoes, Leather ſhoes, Snuff.

" above the fixed price, ſhall pay double the va-
" lue of the articles ſo bought or ſold; their names
" ſhall be inſerted in the liſt of ſuſpected perſons,
" and they ſhall be treated accordingly. All wages,
" ſalaries and daily hire to labourers or mechanics
" ſhall be fixed at the ſame rate as in the year
" 1790, with the addition of one half of the cur-
" rent price at that time. The Municipalities
" may put into a ſtate of requiſition, and puniſh
" according to the caſe with three days impriſon-
" ment, any workman, mechanic, or labourer
" who ſhall refuſe to work at the reduced prices.
" All exiſting contracts for the public ſervice are
" ſubjected to this law, and the contractors com-
" pelled to ſupply government at the reduced
" prices notwithſtanding the ſtipulations in their
" contracts; articles actually delivered or diſpatch-
" ed to the place of their deſtination, at the time
" of the decree, alone excepted."

It is not difficult to conceive the effect of this law, which compelled every merchant, tradeſman, and ſhop-keeper, who muſt have purchaſed the enumerated articles at the high price of 1793, to ſell them at the low price fixed by the Convention. The neceſſary and immediate conſequence was the ruin of every perſon on whom the law was executed; none could eſcape but thoſe, who having goods on hand not of a periſhable nature, ſhut up their ſhops and warehouſes in expectation of better times In this ſtate of things, a ſupplementary law was propoſed with two profeſſed views which are ſingularly combined, to relieve the ſufferers under the former law, and to compel a more exact and rigorous execution of its principle. It was introduced by a Report from Barrere in the name of the Committee of Public Welfare which deſerves particular notice, becauſe it contains the general maxims

maxims of agriculture and commerce, from which are derived all the decrees of the National Convention relating to thoſe important branches of political œconomy.

The report opens with a ſevere complaint in the name of liberty againſt agriculture and commerce: —" Liberty in eſtabliſhing herſelf upon the French " territory repoſed with pleaſure in the arms of " agriculture and of commerce.

" But what has Agriculture done for Liberty? " Agriculture has only ſought to increaſe her own " profits, to calculate her own advantages, and to " raiſe the price of all the neceſſaries of life.

" What has Commerce done for Liberty? Com- " merce has waſted the ſources of internal circu- " lation by clandeſtine exportations; commerce " has neglected with a ſort of counter-revolutio- " nary peeviſhneſs every ſpecies of manufacture " and uſeful art. The avarice of Commerce is " become the accomplice of Deſpotiſm: We " might be inclined to think that Commerce is a " monarchical ſlave unworthy of liberty, if we " did not know the cauſe of this miſconduct; " the Mercantile Government of England has " raiſed againſt us the commercial intereſt of the " whole world, and among the reſt, even the " commercial intereſt of France." The Report proceeds to ſtate that the law for fixing the price of the neceſſaries of life, or (as it is called) the law of the Maximum, had not been executed in many parts of the Republic, and that the law itſelf was inadequate in its proviſions.

" The law of the Maximum ought to have em- " braced the whole ſyſtem of commerce from the " grower who furniſhes the raw material, down " to the retail merchant, who ſells the manufac- " tured article to each citizen for his daily wants.

" The

" The law of the Maximum ought to extend over " the whole of the uſeful chain of growers, labour- " ers, manufacturers, mechanics, wholeſale and " retail merchants. The effect of this would have " been, to envelope Commerce on all ſides, to " inveſt it (if ſuch an expreſſion may be uſed) " with the popular intereſts, by purſuing it from " its very ſource to its laſt and moſt imperceptible " ramification. This would have been the true " way to force Commerce to become uſeful and " beneficial. Commerce, in other countries ſo " uſeful, ſo beneficial, ſo neceſſary, is become in " this revolution of liberty a ſort of avaricious " tyrant, whom, to render ſerviceable, we have " been obliged to enſlave." The Report concludes with an argument to prove that the " Sans Cu- " lottes alone, who have ſuffered under the opera- " tion of the law of the Maximum, were deſerv- " ing of any relief, becauſe the wholeſale mer- " chants had ſufficient means of indemnifying " themſelves by ſtock-jobbing, and other ſimilar " practices."

Theſe opinions of the Committee of Public Welfare have no doubt aſtoniſhed the Houſe, accuſtomed to cheriſh the intereſts of agriculture and of commerce, as being eſſential to the happineſs of the people, and to the opulence and ſtrength of the empire. But let us examine the decree which followed this report, and ſee how far the practice of this Government ſurpaſſes its theory.

The decree allows five per cent. profit to the wholeſale dealer, and ten per cent. profit to the retailer of the articles enumerated in the former law over and above the price fixed by that law. It then proceeds to enact the two following regulations:

1. " The

1. " The Convention, wiſhing to adminiſter re-
" lief to the poorer claſs of the people, decrees
" that an indemnity ſhall be granted to thoſe mer-
" chants or manufacturers, who can give ſatisfac-
" tory proof of their entire ruin under the opera-
" tion of the law of the Maximum, or who ſhall
" be reduced to a fortune of leſs than 400*l.* ca-
" pital.

2. " The manufacturers and wholeſale dealers
" who, ſince the law of the Maximum, have
" quitted, or ſhall quit their manufactories or
" trade, ſhall be treated as ſuſpected perſons."

Thus then it is directly admitted, that the former law had already occaſioned the ruin of many perſons affected by it, although the interval between the paſſing of the two laws was little more than a month.* But the perſons, to whom relief is to be given by the ſecond law, are only thoſe who can give *ſatisfactory proof of their entire ruin*; or whoſe fortunes have been reduced to a republican level; whatever may have been the property of any merchant or manufacturer injured by the law of the Maximum, no indemnity is to be granted to any ſufferer whoſe capital has not been reduced below the ſum of 400*l.* By what ſcale the Revolutionary Government has meaſured the ruin of its ſubjects, it is not very eaſy to underſtand. An opulent merchant or manufacturer in any other country, who by the ſudden effect of a ſingle law ſhould find his commercial capital reduced to a ſum of 400*l.* would be thought in a ſituation to *give ſatisfactory proof of his entire ruin.* But as in the law of the forced loan, the fundamental principle of the calculation was, that the income of every

* The law of the Maximum paſſed on the 29th of September, the Supplementary Law on the 1ſt of November.

man

man in France ſhould be reduced to one hundred and eighty pounds; ſo the law of the Maximum ſeems to have purſued the ſame doctrine of equality, and to have decided, that no individual ſhould poſſeſs a commercial capital of more than four hundred pounds.

The ſecond regulation is perhaps the moſt grievous act of injuſtice and oppreſſion that ever was enforced againſt the intereſts of commerce. To compel ſubjects by an act of power to exerciſe any particular branch of trade, is always both unjuſt and impolitic: but it was reſerved for the Revolutionary Government, firſt to render particular branches of trade ruinous to thoſe who were actually engaged in them, and then to compel the ſame perſons to purſue thoſe ruinous branches of trade, and to impriſon every man who ſhould endeavour to ſave his property from that deſtruction, of which he already felt the approaches.

The firſt effect of ſuch violence would undoubtedly be, to transfer all the articles affected by the law into the hands of the Government, and to facilitate for a time the ſupply of Paris and of the armies: but it is evident that the reproduction of the ſame articles within the country would immediately receive a ſevere check, and that no man would purchaſe them from foreigners in order to ſell them again at a conſiderable loſs. The certain conſequence of this meaſure muſt therefore be, to annihilate the ſtock of all the neceſſaries of life in France, and to haſten the moment when it will become impoſſible for the Government, either to ſubſiſt the people at home, or even to maintain an army upon the frontier.*

Previous

* In a Letter publiſhed from Lyons are theſe words:
" We have neither grain, coals, wood, nor proviſions of any
" kind

Previous to the paſſing of this law, the price of corn, grain, and flour had been fixed by a ſpecial decree; and I have already obſerved that the whole crop of every farmer under a fundamental article of the conſtitution of the Revolutionary Government was to be at the diſcretion of the Committee of Public Welfare, and of their agents in the ſeveral departments. This leads me to obſerve, upon certain general rights with reſpect to the produce of the ſoil, and to articles of ordinary conſumption claimed by the Government as ariſing out of the revolutionary ſtate of the Republic.

The firſt is the right of Pre-emption. In the report upon the law of the Maximum Barrere ſays, "that the law of Pre-emption renders the "government proprietor for the time of every "thing which commerce, induſtry or agriculture "have produced from the ſoil, or imported into "the territory of France." It is impoſſible to hear this doctrine without remarking the intimate connection between the principles of anarchy on which the Revolutionary Government was founded, and the principles of deſpotiſm by which it is maintained. From the ſovereignty of the people, and the natural equality of mankind the Government deduces its right to the produce of the whole ſoil of France, and to the whole property of every individual in the Republic: a right, which is the very eſſence of deſpotiſm, and which has hitherto been conſidered as the characteriſtic mark, by which

"kind. The tax called Maximum was publiſhed on Saturday, "which was in fact, to inform the peaſants to bring nothing to "market. The women roſe up againſt them, and menaced "them with the armed force. The peaſants for ſix leagues "round, keep back all eatables. They ſound the tocſin when "buyers approach them and treat them as monopolizers, rob "and aſſaſſinate them."

arbitrary government was to be diſtinguiſhed from limited Power. Under this right ſo broadly laid down the Committee of Public Welfare affects to claim nothing more than a preference in the purchaſe of whatever articles may be required by their agents for public uſe; but I have ſhewn already, that by the law of the Maximum they have exerciſed the power of fixing an arbitrary price upon all ſuch articles.

The right of Requiſition is derived from that which I have laſt deſcribed; under the right of Requiſition the officers of government are empowered to require from every man in the country not only whatever part of his property of any deſcription they may chuſe to declare neceſſary for the public uſe, but alſo his manual labour, and his perſonal ſervice; and while this arbitrary requiſition remains in force, no man can diſpoſe either of his labour to any other purchaſer or employer than the officers employed by the ruling faction. You have ſeen that by the law of the Maximum, there is a power of impriſoning every workman or day labourer who ſhall attempt to evade this requiſition. If any perſon ſhall make an incorrect declaration of property which has been put into a ſtate of requiſition, the Government derives from that circumſtance a farther right, which is called the right of PREHENSION:* under this they immediately ſeize

* The right of Prehenſion is explained by the following articles in a Decree of the Convention, ordered, 1ſt, "That the "Committee of Subſiſtence and Supply ſhall exerciſe the right "of Prehenſion in the courſe of the preſent day, and accord-"ingly ſhall collect together all the ſhoes now lying or being in "any magazine, warehouſe, manufacture, or ſhop whatſoever.

2d. "All ſuch ſhoes ſhall be ſent within twenty-four hours to "the armies of the Republic.

3d. "The

ſeize his goods, and ſell them by auction to the profit of the public treaſury. The vexations practiſed againſt farmers, who have not given in ſatisfactory accounts of their crop, or who have ventured to ſell any part of it in compliance with the urgent demands of their neighbours are innumerable; and the ſame violence has been uſed againſt every perſon engaged in trade of any kind.

Out of theſe extraordinary rights ariſes as extraordinary a crime, which is called the *crime of monopoly*, and which is uſually imputed to the claſs of merchants and wealthy farmers, or in general to thoſe who are termed Egotiſts, according to the definition which I have already given of that word.

A Monopoliſt is the poſſeſſor of any quantity of the neceſſaries of life, beyond the exigency of his daily ſubſiſtence. Every man therefore, whoſe circumſtances are at all above indigence, is liable to the charge of monopoly. Whoever happens to have laid up any quantity of the articles, which the Government think fit to require for their ſervice, is alſo deemed a monopoliſt: thus every farmer whoſe barns and granaries are not empty, every merchant and tradeſman whoſe warehouſe or ſhop is not entirely unprovided with goods muſt be ſubject to the charge of monopoly.* This crime is

3d. "The Popular Societies and the different ſections are 'invited to *direct the generoſity of the citizens towards civic gifts 'of ſhoes.*"

* An idea of the nature of the crime of monopoly may be formed from a few particular inſtances: a wine merchant is denounced for having 2000 bottles of wine in his cellars: he is impriſoned, and they are put into a ſtate of *preheniſion* for the public uſe; a female citizen is denounced for having a large ſtock of ſugar and coffee in her poſſeſſion; the agents of Government order it to be put into *circulation*, and accordingly it is ſold by auction for the profit of the Treaſury, and ſhe is ſent to the priſon of St. Pelagie.

puniſhed differently according to the enormity of the caſe; in ſome inſtances the puniſhment is impriſonment attended with forfeiture of property, but it is much more frequently death.

With ſuch theoretical maxims, and with ſuch a practical ſyſtem, the Convention might reaſonably have expected to find both agriculture and commerce in that ſtate of "Counter-revolutionary pee-"viſhneſs," which ſhould ſuſpend every manufacture, every uſeful art of induſtry, and every honeſt purſuit of ſkill or labour. They need not have ſought in the influence of the mercantile Government of England (as they term it) an effect, which is the natural and inevitable reſult of their own violence and oppreſſion. But concluſions of more importance to our preſent deliberation may be drawn from this detail. I have ſhewn already, that by the forced loan, they have effectually checked the progreſſive increaſe of commercial capital; by the law of the Maximum with its ſupplement they have gone a ſtep further, and have directly ſeized the whole commercial ſtock of the country for the ſervice of the current year. I have ſhewn already, that according to their own ſtatements and to the very nature of things their extraordinary expedients of Finance cannot be renewed with any proſpect of ſucceſs. It is equally evident, that their regulations reſpecting agriculture and internal commerce cannot be continued without exhauſting the country of the neceſſaries of life. The rapid operation of every part of this ſyſtem may be ſeen in the effect of the law of the Maximum, which had not paſſed more than a month, when (as Barrere ſtates,) it had entirely ruined all thoſe upon whom it had been effectually executed, and had encreaſed the difficulty of procuring the very articles, the price of which it was intended to reduce.

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With reſpect to foreign commerce it may be conſidered as nearly annihilated. The exportation of all the articles enumerated in the law of the Maximum (in which are included all the principal articles of the French export trade) is abſolutely prohibited. Whatever foreign commerce now exiſts, is carried on excluſively by the Government for the purpoſe of ſupplying the armies, and of poſtponing that diſtreſs for the means of ſubſiſtence, which now threatens every part of France. When we recollect, that one third of the total collective income of the individuals of France is ſtated to ariſe from commerce, we may judge what a blow has been given to the reſources of the Government by the entire deſtruction of the intereſts of commerce both internal and foreign.

Such is the ſyſtem eſtabliſhed upon the ruins of every right of property and of every foundation of general opulence, by which the Revolutionary Government have hitherto procured their revenue, and maintained and ſupplied their numerous armies.

It remains to be conſidered by what applications of terror this ſyſtem has been enforced.

Among the moſt ſacred rights of a free people and the moſt eſſential maxims of juſtice are the right of perſonal freedom, and the maxim, that no perſon ſhould be puniſhed without being heard. Theſe rights were guaranteed to the people of France by the Conſtitution of the 10th of Auguſt 1793. In defiance however of that Conſtitution arbitrary impriſonment and puniſhment upon mere ſuſpicion, the moſt vexatious and odious inſtruments of deſpotic power, have been employed by the Revolutionary Government with a violence ſurpaſſing all that is recorded of the moſt rigorous tyrannies that have ever afflicted mankind. They have formally

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and openly abolished every trace of personal liberty in France by a single law, which requires no other comment than the proceedings of the Convention itself. Barrere, in a Report from the Committee of Public Welfare, explains the principle and object of this law: he says, "The quality of mercy "is the first sacrifice which a good Republican owes "to his country. In order to preserve the Revo- "lutionary vigour of the Government, an institu- "tion terrible indeed, but necessary, an institution "which has been the salvation of France, has been "disseminated throughout all the Sections and all "the municipalities, I mean the law for the arrest "of suspected persons. The keen and piercing eye "of jealous liberty has been fixed upon every Ci- "tizen, has penetrated into every family, and per- "vaded every habitation.

"Public Opinion, which is formed upon the re- "view of innumerable transactions of various "kinds, which have passed at all the periods of the "Revolution from its commencement down to "the present time, Public opinion has marked out "the persons who ought to be suspected, and they "have accordingly fallen under the severity of the "law.

"Birth, prejudices of pride, and habits of ari- "stocracy have branded every remnant of the *Gen- "try of France* as a just object of suspicion.

"The useless if not dangerous nature of their "occupation, their illicit gains, their confidential "concern in the pecuniary affairs of foreigners are "sufficient grounds for the arrest of the *whole class "of Bankers*.

"Their cruel speculations, their contempt for "assignats, their sordid attachment to their own "interest have estranged *all Merchants* from their

"fellow

" fellow citizens; they therefore form another claſs
" of ſuſpected perſons:

" The relations of emigrants, thoſe who have
" aided them in their eſcape, thoſe whom nature
" and the ties of blood have made the neceſſary
" accomplices of all their ſentiments of hatred or
" affection, all theſe are equally obnoxious to Suſ-
" picion:

" *All the clergy* who have refuſed the Conſtituti-
" onal Oath, and who think that all is loſt becauſe
" *their trade is become uſeleſs;* all the *ancient Magiſ-*
" *trates*, all thoſe who have been bred to the pro-
" feſſion of the law, are deſtined by their habits
" and intereſts to *people* the public priſons. Theſe
" are the claſſes of ſociety which are ſentenced at
" once without being heard; theſe are the profeſ-
" ſions which carry their condemnation with them;
" theſe are the natural connections of parentage
" and affection which it is the duty of the law to
" ſtrike without trial and without mercy. Let us
" baniſh all compaſſion from our boſoms! Oh what
" innumerable miſchiefs may be produced by a
" falſe ſentiment of pity! Shall not a few ſlaves
" of monarchy ſacrifice ſome moments of their
" uſeleſs and inactive liberty for the ſalvation of
" the Republic? They ſhall be taught to love liber-
" ty by ſuffering a long confinement. This is true
" humanity; for this is the only ſpeedy and effec-
" tual method of finiſhing all our calamities, of
" completing the Revolution, and of eſtabliſhing
" the Republic on an immoveable foundation.
" Thus this great and free Republic ſhall draw new
" ſtrength and vigour not only from the number
" of her defenders on the frontier, but from the
" number of her enemies impriſoned within her
" boſom; and the liberty of the people ſhall grow
" and flouriſh amidſt crouded camps and overflow-

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" ing jails." I have quoted this paſſionate invective againſt mercy and juſtice, for the purpoſe of apprizing you of the general ideas of the Legiſlators of France upon the ſubject of perſonal liberty; I will now read to you the law which paſſed on the 17th of September.

" 1. Immediately after the publication of the " preſent decree all ſuſpected perſons, who ſhall " be found within the territory of the Republic, " and who are yet at large, ſhall be put into a ſtate " of arreſt.

" Thoſe ſhall be deemed ſuſpected perſons;

" 2. Who by their connections or relationſhip, " by their diſcourſes or writings, have ſhew themſelves to be partizans of tyranny and federaliſm, " and enemies of liberty. 3. Who have no viſible means of ſubſiſtence, or who cannot prove " the diſcharge of their civic duties. 4. Thoſe to " whom certificates of civiſm have been refuſed. " 5. Public officers diſmiſſed or ſuſpended by the " Convention. 6. Such of the nobility, huſbands, " wives, fathers, mothers, ſons and daughters, " brothers or ſiſters, or agents of the emigrants, " as have not conſtantly manifeſted their attachment to the Revolution. 7. Thoſe who have " emigrated between July 1ſt 1789 and the publication of the law of the 8th of April 1792, although they may have returned into France within or before the period preſcribed by that law. 8. " The Committees of Superintendance, or the " Revolutionary Committees appointed in their " ſtead by the Convention or by its Commiſſioners " in the ſeveral departments are to make liſts of " all the ſuſpected perſons within the limits of " their reſpective juriſdictions, to iſſue warrants of " arreſt, and to ſeal up their papers. 9. Arreſted " perſons are to be permitted to take ſuch part of

" their

" their furniture into priſon with them as may be " of abſolute neceſſity. 10. They are to defray " the expence of their guard. 11. Civil and cri- " minal tribunals may detain as ſuſpected perſons " thoſe whoſe indictments have been thrown out " by the juries of accuſation previous to trial, and " thoſe who ſhall have ſtood their trial and have " been *acquitted.*"

In addition to theſe preciſe definitions of ſuſpect- ed perſons, by the fourth article of the Law all thoſe, to whom Certificates of Civiſm ſhall have been refuſed, are included within that deſcription. The Certificates of Civiſm are granted or refuſed at Paris at the diſcretion of the Municipality; and on the 10th of October 1793, " The procureur of the " Commons of Paris reports to the Council Gene- " ral, the characteriſtic marks and ſigns by which " the council may recognize ſuſpected perſons, and " thoſe to whom Certificates of Civiſm ought to " be refuſed." Theſe characteriſtic marks and ſigns include ſo large a deſcription of perſons, that if a ſimilar regulation were to be enforced in any coun- try, or in any aſſembly; it is difficult to imagine any poſſible caſe which might not be brought under ſome one of the articles of this expoſition of the law. For, Sir, you will obſerve that all perſons are ſuſpected and arreſted,

" 1. Who check the energy of the people, and " embarraſs the proceedings of popular aſſemblies " by artful ſpeeches, turbulent cries, and menaces.

" 2. All thoſe who with more prudence talk my- " ſteriouſly of the calamities of the country, la- " ment the condition of the people, and are al- " ways ready to ſpread bad news with an affecta- " tion of regret.

" 3. Thoſe who change their language and con- " duct according to events.

" 4. Thoſe

" 4. Thoſe who pity the greedy farmers and " merchants, againſt whom the law is compelled " to take effectual meaſures.

" 5. Thoſe who talk of liberty, but viſit the late " Nobility, the Counter Revolutionary Clergy, " the Ariſtocracy, the Feuillants, and the Mode- " rates, and appear to take an intereſt in their fate.

" 6. Thoſe who have taken no active part in the " Revolution, and who plead in their exculpation " the payment of taxes, or of patriotic gifts, or " their ſervices either in perſon or by ſubſtitute in " the national guard.

" 7.* Thoſe who have received the Republican " Conſtitution with indifference, and have declared " falſe apprehenſions reſpecting its duration and " eſtabliſhment.

" 8. Thoſe who have done nothing for or " againſt liberty.

" 9. Thoſe who neglect their attendance in the " popular aſſemblies under pretence of being una- " ble to ſpeak in public,, or of being engaged in " the care of their own affairs.

" 10. Thoſe who ſpeak with contempt of the " eſtabliſhed authorities, of the Emblems of the " law, of the Popular Aſſemblies, or of the Defen- " ders of Liberty."†

All theſe, Sir, are ſuſpected, committed to ſafe cuſtody, and to be detained in priſon until the peace.

* The Conſtitution had actually been ſuſpended when theſe reſolutions paſſed.

† It appears that the virtue of Civiſm has never been accurately defined, although the want of it ſubjects men to the loſs of their liberty. One inſtance will ſerve to ſhew the manner in which certificates of Civiſm are granted and refuſed at Paris: a certificate of Civiſm was refuſed to Paliſſot a dramatic author for having ridiculed J. J. Rouſſeau in a comedy; it was granted to him ſome time after, on his proving that he had praiſed Rouſſeau in other works.

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By the laſt article of the law a claſs of perſons is included, very inconſiderable indeed in number, but which one might ſuppoſe to be exempt from ſuſpicion even under all the vigilance and jealouſy of a Revolutionary Government; I mean thoſe who have been acquitted by the previous Jury of Accuſation, or have been declared innocent after a regular and ſolemn trial. By reference to the daily liſts which are publiſhed of criminals condemned or acquitted by the Revolutionary Tribunals, I find that far the greater proportion of the very few who have the fortune to eſcape death is detained in priſon on grounds of ſuſpicion at the mere requiſition of the public accuſer. This is the perfection of tyranny. It is not enough to deprive men of their liberty without alledging any ſpecific crime againſt them, or without admitting them to a hearing; but even after they have been heard and declared innocent, they are ſtill ſubjected to penalties which belong only to convicted guilt.

By different laws and regulations ſeveral other claſſes have been added to the liſt of ſuſpected perſons; ſuch as, thoſe who diſobey the requiſitions laid on their property; thoſe labourers or workmen who diſobey the requiſitions laid on their manual labour; thoſe who have ſhut up their ſhops or warehouſes on account of the reduced price of goods under the law of the Maximum; and laſtly *thoſe who keep the day heretofore called Sunday*. Theſe laws were executed with ſuch activity, that not only the priſons were ſoon crouded with ſuſpected perſons, but the churches and deſerted palaces of the nobility and of the princes of the blood were converted to the ſame uſeful purpoſe. On the 15th of September previous to the paſſing of the law the total number of priſoners confined at Paris was 2020. At the latter end of December it was 5000,

and notwithſtanding the number of executions it is ſtill rapidly encreaſing.* This unparalleled oppreſſion has been extended with at leaſt equal ſeverity over all the provinces; the letters from the Commiſſioners of the Convention are filled with expreſſions of ſelf-applauſe and of congratulation to the Convention upon the encreaſing number of ſtate priſoners in the ſeveral departments.

One of the Commiſſioners writes in the moſt triumphant tone from Rochefort: "The empire of "liberty is eſtabliſhed; the priſons begin to fill in "every part of this neighbourhood."

Dumont Commiſſioner from the Convention in the departments of La Somme and Pas de Calais informs that aſſembly, "that he had harangued the "people at Peronne with a dagger in one hand "and a torch in the other, and had threatened to "declare the whole town in a ſtate of rebellion, if "all the people did not aid him in the arreſt of "ſuſpected perſons; and that at Boulogne he had "cauſed the ſuſpected perſons arreſted in that town "to be brought before him in *forty-four carts* on "their way to their reſpective priſons." This letter furniſhes us with ſome idea of the numbers who have been deprived of their liberty in the provinces. Camille Deſmoulins, a perſon well acquainted with the ſecrets of the Revolutionary Government, calculates that the total number of ſuſpected perſons arreſted all over France between the 17th of September 1793 and the beginning of January 1794 was not leſs than two hundred thouſand; and his ſtatement, which appears conſiſtent with the general circumſtances of the caſe, has never been contradicted, although he has ſince fallen into diſgrace

* Within the laſt month the encreaſe in the number of priſoners at Paris has been above eight hundred.

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with his party, on account of the freedom of his animadverſions upon their conduct.

The unfortunate perſons thus confined receive ſuch a treatment as might be expected from the deſpicable character of the Jacobin Faction. The tyranny exerciſed under the orders of Robeſpierre and his aſſociates has uniformly been as minute and unmanly in every ſtudious refinement of cruelty and vexation by which the ſufferings of helpleſs individuals could be aggravated, as it has been audacious and violent in the ſubverſion of all the moſt important rights and in the deſtruction of all the moſt valuable intereſts of the collective body of the people. A ſingle circumſtance will illuſtrate this obſervation:

On the 16th of November, Levaſſeur a member of the Convention enters that aſſembly in great heat; he ſays, " I am juſt returned from Chantilly, " heretofore in times of ſlavery the palace of the " family of Condé, but now under the reign of " liberty converted into a priſon-houſe for the de- " tention of ſuſpected perſons; I ſaw the kitchen " of thoſe arreſted *Gentlemen*, and I was ſcandali- " zed at the preparations making for their enter- " tainment. It would ſeem that thoſe *Gentlemen* " not expecting to live long, were determined to " make the moſt of their time: all the eggs, butter, " ſugar, and coffee in the neighbourhood had been " foreſtalled and monopolized for the uſe of thoſe " *Gentlemen.* I immediately repreſented this enor- " mous abuſe to the Revolutionary Committee of " the village; the whole Committee ſhared my " juſt indignation, and we concerted meaſures to- " gether for a radical reform of this abominable " luxury. We ordered that for the future the " food of thoſe *Gentlemen* ſhould be of the moſt or- " dinary kind; that no diſtinction of perſons

" ſhould

" ſhould be obſerved; and that all the priſoners, " of whatever quality or deſcription, ſhould be put " upon the ſame common and fraternal regimen." The Convention approves this Republican order, and decrees, " that the food of the perſons detain- " ed in the different priſon-houſes ſhall be frugal, " and the ſame for all, the Rich paying for the " Poor." In conſequence of this decree ſuſpected perſons are compelled to eat with their ſervants, and their property is indiſcriminately applied to defray the common expences of the whole priſon. On the 20th of December, when (to uſe the words of Barrere) the jealous eye of liberty had penetrated into every family, and pervaded every habitation, when the inflexible ſeverity and the indefatigable activity of the delegates of freedom had " peopled" the dungeons of every priſon, an humble petition was preſented at the bar of the Convention by ſeveral women the relations, the wives, the children, and the parents of perſons confined upon ſuſpicion, imploring, that they might be brought to trial, if any crime could be imputed to their charge, or if not, that they might be reſtored to the enjoyment of liberty, the common right of all who have not tranſgreſſed the law. The petitioners were ſharply reprimanded by the preſident, who told them, " that the Convention had been " too merciful, that it had departed from the an- " cient models of republican ſeverity, for that in " all the republics of antiquity ſuſpected perſons " were not merely impriſoned, but put to death."

However a new decree is propoſed by Robeſpierre in a ſpeech, in which he alſo animadverts upon the miſconduct of theſe incivic women, who could liſten to the voice of nature and to the cry of blood when the liberty of their country was at ſtake. The decree enacts, " that a ſecret commiſ-

" ſion

" ſion conſiſting of two members of the Commit-
" tees of Public Welfare and of General Safety
" ſhall be appointed to conſider of the means of
" reſtoring to liberty any patriots, who by acci-
" dent may have been impriſoned with the Ariſto-
" crats. The Commiſſioners are to exerciſe their
" functions with all *neceſſary ſeverity*, and are to be
" *peculiarly cautious not to enervate the energy of the*
" *revolutionary meaſures*. The names of theſe Com-
" miſſioners are to be kept ſecret from the public,
" *in order to avoid the danger of ſolicitations;* and they
" are to diſcharge no perſon from priſon without
" the authority of the two Committees of Public
" Welfare and of General Safety."

On the 26th of December, Barrere makes the humane report which I have already quoted to the Houſe; and he moves in the name of the Committee of Public Welfare that five members in place of two ſhould be appointed for the ſame purpoſe, ſhould aſſemble twice every day, and ſhould decide ſummarily on all caſes of arreſt, without reference to the Committees; in other reſpects Barrere's decree is perfectly conformable to the ſpirit of Robeſpierre's, neither the ſecrecy of the commiſſion, nor the recommendation of ſeverity being in any degree altered. But even this decree appears too mild not only to Robeſpierre, but to the majority of the Convention. Robeſpierre objects to it, as being of the moſt dangerous tendency, and quite contrary to the ſpirit of that which had already paſſed in conſequence of his own motion. He ſays, " it would be a great prejudice to the ſtate to ab-
" ſorb the energy of five members of the Conven-
" tion, by employing them in deciding upon the
" innumerable complaints which they would re-
" ceive from all parts of the Republic, where all
" the priſons were filled with perſons arreſted on

" grounds

" grounds of ſuſpicion. His own plan was more " ſimple, and without any inconvenience; it did " not require that ſo large a portion of the Con- " vention ſhould be excluſively occupied by the " complaints of priſoners; two members *in their* " *leiſure moments whenever circumſtances might happen* " *to permit without expoſing themſelves to importunity* " might have diſcovered the ſmall number of pa- " triots, who perhaps might be found in confine- " ment with the ariſtocrats—By this plan the Com- " mittee of General Safety would not have waſted, " in liſtening to the ſolicitations of bad citizens, " *that time ſo precious to the cauſe of liberty.*" He adds, " that the new decree is dangerous, becauſe, " under favour of it, liberty might poſſibly be " granted to *ſome* ariſtocrats."—What then was to be done between theſe contending motions? The Convention is embarraſſed; they perceive at laſt that their embarraſſment ariſes from an exceſs of miſtaken clemency in their firſt proceeding; they immediately reſume the ſeverity of true Republi- cans; they repeal the decree of Robeſpierre, reject the motion of Barrere, and refer the unfortunate petitioners to thoſe very Committees of whoſe ty- ranny they complained.

Since this proceeding it appears that the Conven- tion has endeavoured to draw a revenue from theſe arbitrary impriſonments.

A propoſition has been referred to the Commit- tee of Public Safety on the motion of Danton for the confiſcation of the property of all ſuſpected perſons; and the property of all parents of emi- grants under detention has been confiſcated provi- ſionally, until they can give proof that they have done their utmoſt to prevent the emigration of their children.

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If the people of France are animated by an enthuſiaſtic zeal for liberty, what muſt be their temper of mind, when they conſtantly behold the miſerable ſpectacle of 200,000 perſons arreſted upon no ſpecific charge, condemned without trial, and deprived of the ineſtimable bleſſings of perſonal freedom upon the vague and equivocal ſuggeſtions of indefinite ſuſpicion? The ſpecious title of a Free, United and Indiviſible Republic cannot deceive a great nation ſuffering under the weight of practical oppreſſion, and diſtracted by the jealous policy of a few men, whoſe vigilant fears bear a juſt proportion to their conſcious guilt. Unleſs we can agree with Barrere, that juſtice executed in mercy is incompatible with the vigour of a well-ordered ſtate; that the ſtrength of a free government is in proportion to the number of ſtate priſoners; and that to people the priſons is to give the beſt pledge of popular liberty, we muſt conclude, that a large proportion of the people of France at this moment anxiouſly deſires the deſtruction of the preſent government, as the only means of reſcuing their relations and friends from the miſeries of impriſonment, as well as of ſecuring themſelves againſt ſimilar oppreſſion.

But theſe violations of the liberty of the ſubject will appear as acts of clemency, when compared with the daily murders and maſſacres which compoſe that ſanguinary and mercileſs ſyſtem, entitled by the Revolutionary Government, the Adminiſtration of Criminal Juſtice.

When Robeſpierre and his faction began to gain aſcendancy in the Convention, one of their firſt meaſures was, to erect an extraordinary tribunal for the trial of ſtate crimes: a tribunal which might ſerve them in the firſt inſtance to acquire power by the murder of their adverſaries, and

eventually might enable them to maintain it by ſimilar outrages. The firſt mention of this dreadful inſtitution ſtruck the Convention itſelf with conſternation and horror. Prophecies were uttered, which have ſince been fulfilled, that this inſtrument of deſtruction would ſoon be turned againſt the repreſentatives of the people; and Vergniaux, who has ſince fallen a victim to that relentleſs tribunal, declared that he and his whole party would prefer death upon the ſpot, to any ſhare in the formation of ſo formidable an engine of tyranny: but Danton decided the Convention; he contended, "that a Revolutionary Government could "not ſubſiſt without ſome repreſentative of the "Supreme Tribunal of the vengeance of the "people; that the inſtitution propoſed would be "a proper ſubſtitute for thoſe tribunals which the "people had formed in the moment of their un-"governable fury: that the people would not "have committed the maſſacre of the 2d of Sep-"tember, if an extraordinary tribunal had then "exiſted." He concluded with theſe remarkable words: "We muſt employ great means to accom-"pliſh dreadful ends; we muſt eſtabliſh an extra-"ordinary criminal code, and we muſt ſeek for "its principles beyond the pale of civil ſociety. "Let us be terrible ourſelves, in order to ſave the "people the neceſſity of being ſo." Thus was the extraordinary tribunal created expreſsly to ſave the people the labour of maſſacre, and to perpetuate by a legal inſtitution and with the authority of the ſtate thoſe ſcenes of blood, of which, even the principal actors in them have never yet ventured to ſpeak openly without the affectation of regret. The favourite principle of the ſovereignty of the people (the ſource of every calamity which they are doomed to ſuffer) affords an equal facility for the

the violation of liberty, and for the deſtruction of life. In conformity to that pernicious doctrine criminal juſtice in France now preſents the image of the ſovereign people employed in the exerciſe of the combined prerogatives of inſurrection and maſſacre, and is aſſimilated both in form and ſpirit to thoſe tribunals of murder, which held their ſeſſion in the priſon of the abbey on the memorable night of the 2d of September.

Under the decree conſtituting the extraordinary tribunal the Judges are named by the authority of the Convention, and are removable at pleaſure. A permanent Jury is named by the Convention for each diviſion of the Tribunal, and the commiſſion of the Jury is nearly of the ſame nature with that of the Judge. The crimes of which this Court is to take cognizance, are deſcribed by the original decree in theſe general terms.

" Every Counter-Revolutionary enterprize, eve-
" ry attempt againſt Liberty, Equality, the unity
" and indiviſibility of the Republic, and the inter-
" nal or external ſafety of the State; every con-
" ſpiracy tending to reſtore monarchy, or to eſta-
" bliſh any other authority dangerous to Liberty,
" Equality, and the Sovereignty of the people."
All theſe indefinite crimes are puniſhable with death, and forfeiture of property.

The forms of proceeding are ſubjected to no reſtraint or rule. The Court is empowered to found its judgments upon any evidence however vague, ſuſpicious, or even from its nature incompetent; or to uſe the words of Lindet, (the perſon who propoſed the original motion) " The Judges
" may ſatisfy themſelves of the guilt of the cri-
" minal by every poſſible means." The eſtabliſhed practice is to interrogate the priſoner both ſecretly and publicly, and to make uſe of his own teſti-

mony againſt himſelf. From this court there is no appeal, excepting the Convention ſhould think fit by an arbitrary interpoſition to over-rule its proceedings.

The founders of this tribunal have employed it for the accompliſhment of two objects; firſt, as a party engine, to extinguiſh by violence the ſpirit of indignation and abhorrence riſing in every part of the Republic againſt their crimes; and ſecondly, as a ſource of revenue to procure money and goods by the murder of opulent bankers and merchants, and by the confiſcation of their property.

With the firſt view numberleſs perſons have been executed for incivic or counter-revolutionary words, and for diſcourſes, or writings "tending "to provoke" the reſtoration either of Monarchy or of any other authority in any degree dangerous to the ſovereignty of the Jacobin faction: theſe executions have not been confined to the gentlemen, clergy, or perſons of property; numbers in the inferior claſſes of the people have ſuffered death for mere looſe converſation: not only emigrants, but even the family or friends of an emigrant who may have aided and aſſiſted him in eſcaping from a country, in which he could no longer remain with ſafety, are puniſhed with death. Many parents, wives and children of emigrants have been executed, for having obeyed the common dictates of nature by relieving the urgent diſtreſſes of their baniſhed relations; and bankers have ſuffered the ſame puniſhment for having in the ordinary courſe of their buſineſs permitted the money of emigrants to paſs through their hands. To circulate falſe news, or to give any impediment by words, or otherwiſe to the recruiting of the army have been made capital crimes.

crimes. Under various pretences of plots againſt the Unity and Indiviſibility of the Republic, or of conſpiracies for the eſtabliſhment of ſome counter-revolutionary authority, all thoſe who had borne any diſtinguiſhed part in the earlier periods of the revolution, together with the whole party of Briſſot, and moſt of the Executive Council appointed on the 10th of Auguſt 1793, have been publicly executed. In many caſes, the Convention has paſſed againſt perſons of this deſcription acts of outlawry, under which, whenever they fall into the hands of any criminal tribunal, they are executed without even the form of a trial. Within the courſe of ſix or ſeven months from fifty to ſixty general officers have been executed upon various looſe and indefinite charges. Briſſot ſays, —That if Turenne had commanded the armies of the Republic, he would certainly have been condemned by the extraordinary tribunal, for he was not always ſucceſsful; every defeat would have expoſed him to the ſuſpicion of treachery, and every victory to the imputation of dangerous ambition.

The purpoſe of obtaining revenue is ſcarcely attempted to be diſguiſed in many of the ſentences paſſed by theſe tribunals. By the original decree a power was given of condemning to the puniſhment of tranſportation any perſons who ſhould be convicted of crimes not previouſly defined by law, or to which no ſpecific puniſhment had already been annexed; and ſince that time a law has paſſed for the confiſcation of the property of all perſons under ſentence of tranſportation. The tribunals alſo exerciſe a power of arbitrary fine and impriſonment.

In a letter from the Commiſſioners of the Convention at Straſburg are theſe words. " The Revo-
" lutionary Tribunal which we have eſtabliſhed for
" the

" the judgment of monopoliſts, ſtock-jobbers,
" and merchants who will not ſubmit themſelves
" to the price fixed on the neceſſaries of life has
" already made ſeveral uſeful examples; many
" perſons have been condemned to pay fines of
" fifty and an hundred thouſand livres (of two or
" four thouſand pounds) and to ſuffer ſome years
" of impriſonment. A few more ſentences of
" this kind are wanting to deſtroy the deſire of
" gain, which is carried to a ſcandalous exceſs in
" this commercial town, but the Tribunal ſpares
" nobody, and the cauſe of liberty will proſper."

From Bourdeaux a regular account was tranſmitted to the Jacobin Club of the ſums received for the State on account of perſons executed, amounting to ſeveral millions of livres. The Mayor of Bourdeaux was beheaded becauſe his brilliant fortune enabled him to attempt to hold an even hand between the two contending factions in that city, and becauſe he had ſeconded ſome reſolutions of the popular ſociety eſtabliſhed there: his brilliant fortune, which was the eſſence of his crime, was ſeized for the uſe of the Government at Paris.

An account was given to the Jacobins that the execution of two Jews of the name of Rabas at Libourne, had *produced* twenty-three millions of livres, (about a million ſterling) to the Republic; the charge againſt them was, that they had lent money which was to be employed in raiſing a force in the departments at the time when the lives of the majority of the Convention were threatened at Paris by Marat, Robeſpierre and the Faction now exerciſing the powers of Government. Innumerable inſtances of the ſame kind might be cited, in which perſons have been condemned to death under various frivolous pretences, obviouſly for the

the purpoſe of ſeizing their property. The mere poſſeſſion of a large property is conſidered as a crime, and is diſtinctly ſtated to be ſo by Robeſpierre himſelf on a remarkable occaſion: I mean when he prefers an impeachment in the Jacobin Club againſt Anacharſis Clootz the orator of the human race. He charges *Monſieur* Clootz (as he ſtyles him by way of diſgrace on that occaſion) with the atrocious crime of poſſeſſing five thouſand pounds a year. Upon this *Monſieur* Clootz is expelled from the Club, has ſince been expelled from the Aſſembly, and will probably expiate the ſin of being a man of property by the forfeiture of his life and of his eſtate.

The ſtock in trade of merchants, as I have already obſerved in defining the crime of monopoly, is appropriated to the uſe of the Committee of Public Welfare, or in their own phraſe, put into circulation by the ſame ſummary proceſs. With what ſeverity this law is executed we may judge by a remarkable inſtance in which the Convention graciouſly extended its mercy to a criminal convicted of monopoly, and was ſo elated with this diſtinguiſhed act of clemency, as to expreſs a deſire that it might be publiſhed throughout all Europe, in order to confound the enemies of France, and to refute the calumnious charges which had been circulated againſt the juſtice, humanity, and mildneſs of the criminal courts inſtituted by the Revolutionary Government. Gaudon a wine merchant was accuſed of not having written over his door, according to the directions of the law, the quantity and quality of the wines contained in his cellars; he was condemned to death; but it appeared afterwards, that during his abſence from his houſe, his ſon had by miſtake omitted to place over his father's door the regular declaration of

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his ſtock in trade; and upon this the Convention pardoned the convict. By the very terms of the pardon it is evident, that every man, who wilfully omits to write over his door the exact amount of his ſtock in trade, is by law to ſuffer death.

I cannot attribute to the Revolutionary Government the merit of invention in this particular branch of their ſyſtem. The idea of drawing revenue from fictitious crimes is taken from governments which do not ſeem to furniſh the beſt models of imitation for a Republic founded on the natural rights of man; I mean the barbarous tyrannies on the coaſt of Africa, whoſe revenue is chiefly drawn from the ſacrifice of the liberties and lives of their ſubjects under the pretence of crimes, imagined merely to ſerve the purpoſe of financial reſource. Here, again, we may trace the near connection between deſpotiſm and the ſovereignty of the people. The ſovereign people of France in their mad career of political liberty ſuffer their principles of revenue to be derived from the very ſpring and origin of the moſt odious civil ſlavery; and the national treaſury under a republican and revolutionary adminiſtration exhibits a faithful copy of the ſlave markets of Dahomey and Whydah.

By adverting more particularly to the conduct of ſome remarkable trials and to other circumſtances I will endeavour to bring before you the true character of theſe tribunals, the ſanguinary ſpirit of the judges, and their open violation of all the rules and principles of evidence which have been deviſed for the protection of innocence by the wiſdom, juſtice, and humanity of free and civilized nations. Previous to the trial of Briſſot and the impeached Deputies of the Convention, Rouſſillon, one of the permanent Jury of the Revolutionary Tribunal goes to the Jacobin Club, and having

ing complained that he had not yet enjoyed the ſatisfaction of beholding thoſe traitors at the feet of the Tribunal, aſſures the Club, that whenever they ſhall be brought to their trial, he will take care that they ſhall not eſcape; he is much applauded for the patriotic energy of this declaration. During the trial of the Deputies a letter is received by the Convention from the judges of the extraordinary Tribunal to the following effect: "The depu-
" ties whom you have accuſed have now been five
" days upon their trial, and only nine witneſſes
" have been examined; every witneſs delivers a
" long and circumſtantial evidence; the priſoners
" croſs-examine each witneſs, and afterwards make
" their obſervations upon the evidence; this pro-
" duces a diſcuſſion, which is much protracted by
" the loquacity of the priſoners; this trial will be
" endleſs; we have already given you ſufficient
" proofs of our activity and zeal to exempt us
" from any ſuſpicion of negligence or delay; but
" our progreſs is obſtructed by certain formalities,
" which will at once vaniſh before the authority
" of the Legiſlature. We all aſk ourſelves where-
" fore any witneſſes? The Convention and the
" whole people of France accuſe the priſoners.
" The proofs of their crimes are evident; every
" man has in his heart the conviction of their
" guilt."

The embarraſſment of the ſupreme and extraordinary criminal court will no doubt appear to a Britiſh Houſe of Commons to be ſuch as would require the immediate interference of the Legiſlature. One and twenty men on trial for their lives, and not a man but deſires to be heard! Juſtice delayed, and in danger of being diſappointed by her own vain and idle forms! But the wiſdom of the repreſentatives of a free people came to the relief

of theſe venerable judges; the Convention having conſulted the Jacobin Club, its approved counſellor in all difficulties and dangers decreed, that " whenever any trial ſhould have laſted three days, the " judges ſhould call on the jury to declare whether " their conſciences were ſufficiently enlightened to " enable them to give a verdict; if the jury ſhould " anſwer in the affirmative, whatever might be " the ſtage of the proceeding, no farther teſtimony or argument ſhould be admitted, and the " Court ſhould immediately give judgment, as " if the priſoner had regularly cloſed his caſe. To " this decree was added another, declaring that " the extraordinary criminal tribunal ſhould from " that moment change its name, and bear the honourable title of the Revolutionary Tribunal, " and that in conformity to its new title it ſhould " judge all crimes of State by a revolutionary proceſs," or in other words, without formality and without evidence.

Theſe laws were immediately diſpatched to the Court then ſitting in judgment on the deputies. The new regulations were inſtantly applied to the depending trial; the evidence was ſuddenly interrupted; the priſoners were ſilenced; ſentence of death was paſſed upon them; and they were hurried unheard and undefended to the public ſcaffold. The moſt juſt objects of the ſeverity of the law, when denied the common privilege of a fair trial and of a free defence, will move the compaſſion of mankind, and will even in ſome degree excite the ſame ſentiments, which naturally attend oppreſſed innocence. Guilty as moſt of theſe men were of the murder of their ſovereign, guilty as they all were of that wicked conſpiracy which contrived the maſſacre of the 10th of Auguſt, and which produced the maſſacre of the 2d of September, we

yet

yet forget the enormity of their crimes in the undiſguiſed violence of their condemnation, and our indignation is (for a time at leaſt) transferred from the ſuffering criminal to the murderous Judge.

What then ſhall we ſay of the pretended trial of the Queen, where our attention is withdrawn from all the affecting circumſtances of her unexampled ſituation by the flagrant iniquity of that unmanly exerciſe of lawleſs power? Her ſex, her exalted dignity, her protracted and unequalled misfortunes are all forgotten in the outrageous perverſion of the ſacred forms and maxims of criminal juriſprudence. From her firſt impriſonment to the hour of her murder, while we trace her various ſufferings we feel for the cauſe of juſtice itſelf, a cauſe inſeparably united with the ſecurity and happineſs of the loweſt as well as of the higheſt ranks of civil ſociety.

The Convention, the Jacobin Club, and all the agents of the Government employ every means both of encouragement and of terror to exaſperate the ferocity of the judges and juries in the diſcharge of their dreadful functions. The leaſt delay of judgment againſt a rich or unpopular criminal produces a ferment in the regenerated popular ſocieties, and among all the inſtruments of the prevailing faction; while on the other hand every precipitate, corrupt, and ſanguinary condemnation is extolled as the perfection of patriotic zeal and the model of republican virtue. The deſire of ſhedding human blood is carried to ſuch a paſſionate exceſs, that in the letters of ſome of the Commiſſioners of the Convention, the office of common executioner is repreſented as an eminent diſtinction and a primary object of honourable ambition. From Rochefort, Lequinio and Taignelot write a letter to the Convention in theſe words: "Behold another tri-

" umph of morality, not over Preſbyterian mum-
" mery, (for that exiſts no longer in this country)
" but over a prejudice as abſurd and as deeply root-
" ed in the minds of men! We have formed here
" a Revolutionary Tribunal upon the model of
" that at Paris; we named of our own authority
" all the members of the Court, excepting that
" member whoſe duty it is to cloſe the proceedings,
" we mean the Executioner; we wiſhed to leave
" to the patriots of Rochefort the glory of ſhew-
" ing themſelves the voluntary avengers of the
" Republic; we ſignified the vacancy in the Tri-
" bunal at a full meeting of the popular ſociety;
" the citizen Ance cried out with a noble enthuſi-
" aſm, I am the man who aſpires to the honour of
" beheading the aſſaſſins of the country. He had
" ſcarcely time to utter theſe words, when a croud
" of other patriots preſſed forward to offer them-
" ſelves for the ſame office, and they all anxiouſly
" ſolicited to be at leaſt indulged with the favour
" of being permitted to aid the fortunate candi-
" date in the diſcharge of his duty. We made
" proclamation that the patriot Ance had been in-
" veſted with the honourable office of Common
" Executioner, and we invited him to dinner,
" where we delivered into his hand his warrant of
" office, and poured a libation over it in honour of
" the Republic; we think that in a few days the
" judges will put him in the way of giving a prac-
" tical proof of his patriotiſm, To this patriot
" who has taken upon himſelf with ſo much gene-
" roſity the trouble of executing the ſentences of
" the Revolutionary Tribunal, we have given the
" title of Avenger of the People; and to the in-
" ſtrument which delivers us from traitors, that
" of the Juſtice of the People, this title is inſcrib-
" ed upon the guillotine in large characters."

The

The zeal of ſome of theſe Commiſſioners has carried them even beyond the extravagance of this letter. With a ſtrange mixture of ridiculous phrenzy, of wanton impiety, and of ſavage cruelty, after having profaned the eſtabliſhed ſymbols of every religion, they have conſecrated the inſtrument of ignominious death, and ſtyling it in their public diſpatches, "Our Holy Mother the Guillotine," have thus attributed to it the combined character of Parent and tutelary Deity of the Republic.

The Houſe will judge what muſt be the Adminiſtration of Criminal Juſtice in France, when the Commiſſioners of the Legiſlature encourage conteſts, and hold public elections for the office of Common Executioner, admit the ſucceſsful candidate to their table, join with him in toaſting ſeverity to the judges, and ſanctify the axe itſelf as an object of filial affection and of religious veneration. The ſpirit and practice of the Revolutionary Tribunal cannot be better ſummed up than in the words of Briſſot, uttered a few days before his impriſonment. He ſays, "It is a tribunal arbitrary in its forms, abſurd and partial in its proofs, iniquitous in its judgments, and fit to make one regret the baſtiles of deſpotiſm."

The effuſion of blood at Paris has been ſuch, that not leſs than a thouſand executions have taken place there within the courſe of ſix months. Yet the vengeance and avarice of the Government is ſo far from being ſatiated, that the Commiſſioners of Police have lately acquainted the Municipality of Paris, that the pit which had been appropriated for the burial of the unfortunate victims of the Revolutionary Tribunal was nearly full, and could not hold above "ſome ſixty" more, they therefore deſire immediate authority to dig another in order

order to prevent any delay of juſtice. I cannot forbear to remark in this place, that during the whole period when all the power and authority of Government in France were exerciſed by that humane and benevolent Prince, whoſe innocent blood was ſhed on the ſcaffold, not one inſtance is to be found of an execution for a ſtate crime!

But the tribunal at Paris, although ſubdivided into four ſections, could not circulate the ſalutary movement of terror with ſufficient promptitude and effect to the extremities of the Republic. The Guillotine had long been in a ſtate of permanent activity at Paris; the ingenuity of zealous patriots was now exerciſed in deviſing means for propagating the uſe of this favourite engine of liberty, and various mechanical inventions were propoſed with a view to provide portable axes, and ambulatory ſcaffolds.

A new military force was raiſed at the expence of perſons of property under the title of a Revolutionary army, for the expreſs purpoſe of traverſing every Department of the Republic, and of ſuppreſſing every ſymptom of a Counter-revolutionary ſpirit. To each regiment of this army is attached a corps of light armed Judges, and a flying guillotine. (I copy their own expreſſions; and if I appear to treat too lightly proceedings calculated to inſpire indignation and horror, you muſt impute it to the peculiar genius and character of the Men of whom I ſpeak, to the wild extravagance of their wickedneſs, and to the levity which is always mingled with their moſt atrocious crimes.) But the Commiſſioners of the Convention in the Weſtern Departments have found that even the Revolutionary laws were too mild in their nature, and too ſlow in their execution to accompliſh the great objects which were propoſed by the inſtitution of the Revolutionary

Revolutionary army. Accordingly they decreed, that the tribunal attached to their regiment ſhould be both Military and Revolutionary, and that its ſentences ſhould be of a mixed quality, partaking of the principles of martial law, tempered by the mild ſpirit of that humane code, which was ſubſtituted by Danton in place of the fury of the mob. To ſecure the uniform activity of this amphibious Court, it was given out in general orders, that the judges, the public accuſer, the clerk and other officers of the Court ſhould be mounted upon the fleeteſt horſes in the ſervice, and ſhould form a troop of Chaſſeurs, to be united to the eſtabliſhment of the ſtaff, and to take poſt near head-quarters wherever the army might halt. Thus equipped, Laplanche one of the Commiſſioners informs the Convention that he has named his corps "the Infernal regiment," and that he parades the country with Juſtice and Clemency at his left hand, and the guillotine at his right; an order of precedency perfectly conſiſtent with the etiquette of a Revolutionary Government.

It cannot be denied, that this army with its attendant tribunal, uniting all the ſeverity and vigour of civil and military deſpotiſm, is one of the moſt effectual expedients ever yet invented for extending the influence of tyranny to the remote parts of a great empire, and to every claſs and deſcription of a numerous people. It is applicable to every purpoſe of terror, of plunder, and of revenge; it has in fact been applied to all of them in their turn, and has been the main engine of government for ſome time paſt. Its principal duties in the courſe of its march have been (as you may collect from the different reports made to the Convention) to regenerate the municipalities, and to execute the former municipal officers; to collect the revenue,

and

and to ſuperintend the ruin of agriculture and the abolition of commerce; to compel the rich to "diſgorge" their wealth; to compel the farmers and tradeſmen to ſell their ſtock for one-third of its real value; and occaſionally to ſeize the ſtock itſelf, and to murder the proprietor; to lower the price of day labour, and to force the labourer to work at the reduced price; to break open every private houſe under pretence of ſearching for concealed treaſure, and by the application of torture and the terror of death to extort the whole ſubſtance of every opulent farmer, and of every induſtrious tradeſman; to drag all ſuſpected perſons to priſon, and all declared adverſaries of Government to the ſcaffold; to plunder churches of every emblem of Chriſtianity, and to ſuppreſs the worſhip of every form and ſect of religion—But amongſt all the uſes to which the Revolutionary Army is applied, none is more important to the Government, none more vexatious and oppreſſive in its effects on the happineſs and welfare of the people, and none more ruinous to the internal proſperity of the country, than the duty of enforcing the levies for the army on the frontier. I have already endeavoured to explain the ſyſtem of exaction and extortion practiſed for the purpoſe of procuring the means of paying the armies upon the frontier, I have deſcribed its deſtructive operation upon every ſpecies of property, and upon every permanent reſource of revenue; I have alſo ſtated to you the violence and rapine employed in order to ſupply thoſe armies with proviſions, with cloathing, and with every neceſſary ſtore; and I have traced the operation of thoſe meaſures upon the internal trade and cultivation of the country. I ſhall now ſhew that the evils which attend the raiſing of this immenſe military force highly aggravate thoſe by which it is maintained;

maintained; and that the mere levy of theſe armies is in itſelf an oppreſſion of the moſt grievous nature, and productive of the moſt pernicious conſequences to the intereſts both of agriculture and commerce.

The law for the requiſition of the whole maſs of the people, paſſed at the latter end of Auguſt. By this law every man in France from the the age of eighteen to fifty is compelled to give his perſonal ſervice in the army at the requiſition of the National Commiſſioners. The rigour with which this law was executed, will appear from a reſolution of the department of Herault ſanctioned by the Convention, and ſince converted into a general law. "Every father and mother ſhall be bound to de- "clare the place of abode of their children ſum- "moned by requiſition for the ſervice of the ar- "my; every Citizen is forbidden to harbour or "conceal any perſons under requiſition. The "ſoldiers of the Revolutionary armies are autho- "rized to arreſt all perſons who ſhall appear to "them to have been put into requiſition, and to "lodge them in jail if they endeavour to eſcape. "The proper officers are to ſearch every houſe "twice a week, in order to diſcover any perſon "who may attempt to elude the requiſition." To enforce this ſevere military conſcription a law was paſſed (to which I have already alluded) ſubjecting any perſon who ſhall impede the levy of the army by words or otherwiſe to the puniſhment of death—Not only no parent can venture even to adviſe his children to remain at home, but in moſt parts of the Republic the Executioner has been the recruiting ſerjeant, and the unfortunate peaſants and labourers in the provinces have been compelled to make their option between the perils of battle, and the unerring ſtroke

of the guillotine. Many inſurrections have happened in the ſeveral departments in conſequence of this violence, and have been ſuppreſſed by the Revolutionary armies and their attendant tribunals.

The immediate effect of ſuch a ſyſtem muſt be to diſturb the happineſs of every private family, to involve all the inferior claſſes of the people in miſery and ruin, to ſuſpend every art of honeſt induſtry, and of uſeful labour, and to expoſe all who remain in the country to the complicated calamities of indigence and famine. To what degree theſe evils were expected to operate by the Convention itſelf, we may judge from the meaſures which have been taken to avert them. Towards the latter end of September a law paſſed to compel all farmers manufacturers or labourers remaining in France to cultivate the lands of thoſe who were abſent on the ſervice of the army. This is the regular courſe of the Revolutionary Syſtem, to endeavour to remedy the miſchievous conſequences of one act of oppreſſion, by committing another. Having torn five hundred thouſand men from the boſom of their families, and from the cultivation of the earth, they attempt to ſupply that loſs by the compulſory labour of thoſe who have been rejected from the ſervice of the army; they have recourſe to the refuſe of their own tyranny; and they rely for the ſubſiſtence of France on the miſerable remnant of a depreſſed, impoveriſhed, and dejected people. That an army, raiſed by ſuch means, ſhould be animated by the enthuſiaſm of liberty I cannot believe, until I can forget all the circumſtances which I have juſt now deſcribed, as well as all the events which have happened in France ſince the acceſſion of the Revolutionary Government. That ſo large a body of men collected

ted together under military diſcipline and oppoſed to an enemy may feel a great degree of military enthuſiaſm, is a propoſition which I do not mean to conteſt; but my object has been in whatever obſervations I have made on this part of the ſubject, to direct your attention to the internal ſtate of France, as reſulting immediately from the operation of theſe military levies. It is for the wiſdom of the Houſe to determine, what muſt be the condition of that ſtate, whoſe army is raiſed by the ſuſpenſion of agriculture, under the terror of death, and at the daily hazard of inſurrection; paid by the deſtruction of the rights of property, and by the practice of public fraud; and ſupplied by the annihilation of trade, and at the riſk of internal famine.

You have now before you the principal features both of the theory and practice of the Revolutionary Government. Reviewing this unexampled ſyſtem in all its details, you will find ſpecial and effectual proviſion eſtabliſhed for the indiſcriminate miſery and ruin of every rank and order of ſociety. It contains a principle of impartial perſecution, equally applicable (as the occaſion may require) to the ſeparate intereſts of every diſtinct claſs and deſcription of the people, from the gentlemen of landed property, and the opulent bankers and merchants, down to the induſtrious manufacturer and the laborious peaſant. Are theſe the arts of Government? Are theſe the means by which the diſcordant intereſts and the contending paſſions of mankind can be brought to act in concert, and can be directed to the welfare of the community the end of all political ſociety, and the only ſolid foundation of power? I ſpeak to an Aſſembly verſed in all the great maxims of Government, affectionately attached to the genuine principles of liberty, and

accuſtomed to deliberate on whatever can effect the intereſts of a powerful ſtate, and the happineſs of a numerous people: in ſuch an aſſembly I am perſuaded that I ſhould not be contradicted, if I were to contend without any further proof, that a tyranny ſo conſtituted and ſo exerciſed muſt of neceſſity be odious to the people, and conſequently whatever might be its temporary efforts, muſt reſt upon an inſecure and uncertain foundation. But I need not rely on general topics, however juſtly drawn from the conſtitution of human affairs, and from the character of man in all ſituations, and in all ages. The people of France, (although hitherto unfortunate in the attempt) have not tamely ſubmitted to the oppreſſion of this mean and humiliating uſurpation. In no leſs than forty of the departments, a ſpirit of indignation has broken out againſt the Government; in many, the people have taken up arms, and waged open war; in ſome, they have expreſſed their diſcontent by riots and inſurrections, by oppoſing the levies for the army, and by refuſing to ſubmit to the confiſcation of their incomes and to the plunder of their goods. This ſpirit has appeared with great ſtrength in all the moſt opulent commercial towns; but it has not been confined to them; it has been diffuſed as widely as the oppreſſion which excited it, and its ſymptoms (varying with opportunities, and with means of exertion) are to be traced in almoſt every town and village of France. They are to be traced in all thoſe acts of arbitrary power by which the ſeveral municipalities have been regenerated, the popular ſocieties purged and purified, and the ſenſe of the people violently ſuppreſſed: they are to be traced in all the expeditions of thoſe Revolutionary armies and itinerant executioners, who have been embodied for the circulation of the movement of terror,

and

and who traverſe the country with expreſs orders to ſtifle the riſing flame of general revolt.

If we are to believe the teſtimony of the Convention, the object of all theſe commotions is uniformly the reſtoration of ſome ſpecies of Monarchy; the Convention inſiſts that the diſcontented ſpirits in France univerſally look up to ſome form of Royal authority, as the only ſtandard under which all the friends of order and law can re-aſſemble with ſafety, under which they may all forget their former animoſities, reconcile their diſcordant opinions, and unite in a firm league for the deſtruction of that deſpotic anarchy which is their common enemy, and which cannot ſubſiſt without producing their common deſtruction. This ſpirit may have been oppreſſed for a time, but it is not extinct. After all the misfortunes which have fallen on thoſe who had the courage to ſtand foremoſt in oppoſition to the plunderers of their country, after all the ſcenes of blood which have been acted under the authority of the Convention, the agents of their cruelty have been compelled to confeſs, that although they have gratified their revenge in the maſſacre of multitudes of their adverſaries, they have not been able to ſubdue the unconquerable "inciviſm" of the ſurvivors. At Bourdeaux, when the Popular Society had been taken by ſtorm, when the whole town had been diſarmed, when three hundred rich merchants had been impriſoned, and when the Revolutionary Tribunal, ſeconded by the patriotiſm of the executioner, had deſtroyed every diſtinguiſhed enemy of anarchy, a letter is written to the Municipality of Paris from one of their agents lamenting, "that after having ſtudied the temper of the public mind at Bourdeaux, he muſt declare, that not one man in that city had yet reached the exalted level of the Revolution.

" tion. The Commiſſioners of the Convention " met regularly in the Temple of Reaſon on the " laſt day of each decade, chaunted hymns in ho- " nour of liberty and ſound philoſophy, and preach- " ed ſermons worthy of true Mountaineers; but " they could ſcarcely collect a congregation."

In other accounts from Bourdeaux it appears, that it had been found neceſſary to regenerate the whole company of actors at the Theatre, to ſecure the performance of Revolutionary plays; but even this meaſure failed of its effect: The actors were changed, but the audience remained the ſame; the audience could not endure to hear a ſingle Revolutionary verſe. To uſe the phraſe of the afflicted patriot who reports the tranſaction, " they hiſſed all the paſſages which were moſt " conformable to the order of the day;" and the new Mayor (the ſucceſſor of him who had been regenerated by the guillotine) was obliged to interpoſe, and to compel by force the free and ſovereign people to receive without indignation the homage offered to their ſovereignty, and to liſten with patience to the panegyric of their freedom.

Although the Convention has repeatedly boaſted that the ſeat of the war in the north-weſtern departments preſented nothing to the view but a heap of aſhes bedewed with the blood of the inſurgents, although we have often heard of the total extirpation of the army of the Royaliſts, that army has as often riſen again, and oppoſed a vigorous reſiſtance to every force which has yet been employed againſt it.

Even at Lyons notwithſtanding all the feaſts and orgies of murder (for ſo they were ſtyled by thoſe who celebrated them) the ſentiments of the citizens remain unaltered, and even undiſguiſed. After having ſequeſtrated the property

of

of all who were engaged in the inſurrection, and having levied a forced loan upon all who were not, for the expreſs purpoſe of "defraying the "expences of the neceſſary demolitions," after the actual demolition of all the moſt beautiful buildings, the execution of the principal citizens, and (according to their own words) "the com-"plete enfranchiſement of the city," the Commiſſioners of the Convention were "aſtoniſh-"ed at the inſenſibility of the inhabitants. A "ſullen ſilence accompanied every period of the "ſalutary work of regeneration; not one expreſ-"ſion of joy was heard for the return of liberty; "not one addreſs of thanks or congratulation "was preſented on an occaſion which ſeemed "naturally to call forth every ſentiment of gra-"titude and ſatisfaction."

The Commiſſioners however, were not diſcouraged, they proceeded with encreaſed vigour; concluding that the effuſion of human blood had not yet been ſufficient to inſpire the people with the enthuſiaſm of true liberty, they now rejected the uſe of their favourite engine of death, as being wholly inadequate to the prodigious magnitude of their extenſive deſigns. Mixing the inſtruments of war with the perverted forms of Criminal Juſtice, and blending the ſolemnity of a public execution with the tumult and ſlaughter of battle, they accompliſhed a project of maſſacre ſuch as never before had been attempted, or even conceived by the moſt inventive genius in the arts of cruelty. This effort alſo diſappointed their expectations; and they complain, that "the trai-"tors, whom they had puniſhed, perſiſted, in "their treaſon even to the hour of their execu-"tion."

Death

Death in its moſt formidable ſhape, attended with every accumulated circumſtance of terror, could not ſhake the conſtancy of theſe brave men. In the face of the executioner, in the very mouths of the cannon pointed againſt them, they maintained their principles, they avowed their attachments, and in their dying agonies, mingled the expreſſions of veneration for the memory of their murdered ſovereign and of loyalty to his ſurviving iſſue with their laſt prayers to their inſulted God.

The effects of this unprecedented barbarity were not more favourable on the minds of the ſpectators. Some time after the commencement of the new ſyſtem of execution, the General of a diviſion of the Revolutionary army declares, that "when he entered the city of Lyons, although "the inhabitants paid him the compliment of ſhutting up their houſes and ſhops as he marched "before their doors, they demonſtrated by the "moſt unequivocal geſtures their obſtinate adherence to the crimes of thoſe, whoſe puniſhment "they had beheld." He ſays, "he met ſeveral "women diſperſed through the ſtreets, and in "every face he perceived the expreſſions of rage "and reſentment, rather than thoſe of repentance "or fear." The Commiſſioners of the Convention appear at length abſolutely to deſpair of the complete regeneration of this Enfranchiſed city; in one of their laſt reports they acknowledge, "that among an hundred and forty thouſand in"habitants, they have as yet diſcovered not more "than fifteen hundred exempt from the guilt of "rebellion; and they recommend as the laſt ex"pedient, that all the inhabitants ſhould be ba"niſhed from Lions in bodies of twenty or thirty "thouſand, and ſettled in ſome remote part of "France;

" France; they expreſs a hope that theſe colonies, " when tranſplanted into a better ſoil, may bear " the fruits of liberty." But where is that happy ſoil to be found, in which they ſhall learn to forget the indignities which they have ſuffered, and the cruelties which they have beheld?

It is obſerved by a French author,* that the Jacobin faction has encreaſed the number of its enemies, by the very means employed to exterminate them. Maſſacre will not extinguiſh popular diſcontent. Every victim of injuſtice and cruelty bequeaths his revenge to his connections, to his friends, and to his relations: or (if all theſe ſhould be involved in the ſame common fate with himſelf) every ſuch execution raiſes deteſtation and abhorrence even in the breaſts of ordinary ſpectators, and unites the public opinion againſt a Government, which exiſts only by the daily practice of robbery and murder.

From this diſguſting ſcene, let us turn our eyes to our own ſituation; here the contraſt is ſtriking in all its parts—" Here (to uſe the eloquent language of a diſtinguiſhed Member of this Houſe) " We ſee nothing of the character and genius of " arbitrary finance; none of the bold frauds of " bankrupt power; none of the wild ſtruggles and " plunges of deſpotiſm in diſtreſs; no lopping off " from the capital of debt; no ſuſpenſion of intereſt; no robbery under the name of loan; no " raiſing the value, no debaſing the ſubſtance of " the coin."

Here we behold public credit of every deſcription flouriſhing under all the diſadvantages of a general war; an ample revenue, flowing freely and

* Camille Deſmoulins.

* Vide Mr. Burke's Speech on the Economical Reform of the King's Houſhold.

copiouſly from the opulence of a contented people, from the encreaſing ſources of Agriculture not only unimpaired, but actually improved even in the midſt of hoſtilities; from a Commerce, not engaged in a hoſtile conteſt with the Supreme Power of the State, not "*enſlaved and inveſted on all ſides*" by arbitrary reſtraints, not reproached, ſuſpected, and puniſhed for its accumulating profits, but protected in its gains, unreſtrained in its enterprizes, ſupported in difficulty, and relieved from danger by the vigilant care of a wiſe and provident legiſlature. We behold armies not levied by compulſory requiſitions, not torn from the plough and the loom by the hands of the executioner, not paid and ſupplied by *prehenſions* and ſeizures of private property, but proceeding from the ſpontaneous effort of a brave nation, maintained without difficulty and without oppreſſion, and aſſiſted under all the hardſhips of war, by the voluntary generoſity of their fellow ſubjects. Inſtead of the proſcription of honeſt induſtry, and the confiſcation of all private fortunes, inſtead of peopled priſons and crouded ſcaffolds, inſtead of perſecuted chriſtianity, and eſtabliſhed atheiſm, we ſee property reſpected, juſtice allied with mercy and liberty with law, an inviolable regard for the rights of perſonal freedom, and a ſacred reverence for the principles of religion; and in the public mind we find a due ſenſe and value of all theſe bleſſings, a general conviction that they are all involved in the iſſue of the preſent conteſt, and a firm determination to proſecute it with vigour, as the only means of ſecuring their continuance.

The reſult of this view both of the condition of our enemy and of our own leads to a variety of deductions, all of which are eſſentially connected with the ſubject of our preſent deliberation: it proves,

proves, that the whole fabric of the Government, now prevailing in France, is unſound in every part; that the meaſures, by which the efforts of that Government have been maintained in the laſt campaign, are at this moment exhauſting the reſources of the country, not ſlowly and gradually, not according to the regular progreſs of ordinary evils in the adminiſtration of States, but with a rapidity and violence which at once diſſolve the very elements of the ſyſtem of political economy, and preclude the poſſibility of recurring even to the ſame deſtructive projects in the event of any new exigency; it proves, that theſe meaſures are not only temporary and occaſional in their very nature, but are expreſsly admitted to be ſo by the perſons who propoſed them; all the moſt important operations of Finance are of this deſcription; and Barrere himſelf felt the levy of the maſs of the people, to be a project of ſuch danger, that when he introduced it into the Convention, he juſtified it upon this ſingle argument, " that it would bring the " war to a termination in the courſe of the cam- " paign," meaning that campaign which has juſt now been cloſed.

It proves, that ſuch having been the true cauſes of whatever difficulties we have already experienced, we may entertain a reaſonable expectation, that cauſes ſo unnatural together with their monſtrous effects muſt ultimately yield to a ſteady and unremitting exertion of our natural and genuine ſtrength, confirmed by the co-operation of our numerous allies; it proves farther, that the ſame meaſures which have enabled the ruling faction to reſiſt our attacks, have been ſo odious to the feelings, and ſo ruinous to the intereſts of every claſs and deſcription of perſons in France, as to have entirely alienated a large proportion of the people from

the Government; and this circumſtance becomes a ſtrong additional reaſon for perſeverance in our efforts, as it muſt tend to facilitate the ſucceſs of any impreſſion, which we may hereafter be enabled to make.

Such are the reaſons on which I ground my hopes of our final ſucceſs in the preſent war. The neceſſity of our perſeverance is to be deduced from the ſame conſiderations. For it appears in the firſt place from the detail which I have laid before you, that the deſtructive doctrines and the falſe principles of Government, of which you dreaded the extenſion even in their infancy, have now attained full maturity and vigour, and have produced enormities infinitely ſurpaſſing whatever you had apprehended from their progreſſive malignancy, and from their active powers of miſchief. It appears, that theſe enormities have been formally digeſted into a code, and embodied in a regular ſyſtem, from which has ſprung a tyranny ſo atrocious in form, in ſubſtance, in principle, and in practice, that as every man of common humanity muſt deſire to ſee it deſtroyed in France for the ſake of the people who ſuffer under it, ſo every member of civil ſociety would willingly encounter the calamities of the moſt protracted war, rather than incur the riſk of ſubjecting his own country to the pernicious effects of ſuch an evil. The queſtion, therefore, which remains to be conſidered is, whether we can effectually ſecure ourſelves againſt the inroad of that evil, by any other means than the continuance of our preſent exertions.

From the facts which I have already enumerated, it is inconteſtible, that in proportion as this tyranny conſumes the property of France, it muſt entertain projects of ambition and aggrandizement; it muſt endeavour to repair its diſordered finances by

by preying upon its neighbours, and to ſupply the exhauſted reſources of domeſtic confiſcation by foreign plunder. It is equally evident, on the ſame general grounds, that it muſt be the immediate intereſt of a Government, founded on principles wholly contradictory to the received maxims of all ſurrounding nations, to propagate the doctrines abroad, by which it ſubſiſts at home, to aſſimilate every neighbouring ſtate to its own ſyſtem, and to ſubvert every conſtitution which can form a diſadvantageous contraſt with its own abſurdities; ſuch a Government muſt therefore from its nature be hoſtile to all regular Governments of whatever form, but above all to thoſe which are moſt ſtrongly contraſted with its own vicious ſtructure, and which afford to their ſubjects the beſt ſecurities for the maintenance of order, liberty, juſtice, and religion.

Engaged in a conteſt with enemies of ſuch a character nothing can ſecure us againſt the danger of their future violence, but an effectual reduction of their preſent power. A peace founded on any other principle would not only be illuſory, but muſt inevitably produce the moſt fatal conſequences to all our moſt valuable intereſts. But the Government of France neither can nor will accede to terms of peace in any degree conformable to this principle ſo indiſpenſably neceſſary to our ſecurity.

By an article of the Conſtitution of the 10th of Auguſt 1793 it is poſitively declared as a fundamental maxim of the foreign policy of France that ſhe will not conclude Peace with an enemy who occupies any part of her territory; this article was not ſuſpended by the inſtitution of the Revolutionary Government; it was acted upon by the agents of the Convention in the iſland of Corſica during the courſe of the laſt campaign, and their

proceedings

proceedings have ſince been deliberately approved by the Convention.

Under this article it is obvious, that no Peace can be concluded with France, unleſs we previouſly ſurrender into her hands all the acquiſitions which we have made from her territory in the courſe of the preſent campaign; and here the importance of thoſe acquiſitions will perhaps be felt even by thoſe who have hitherto undervalued them. We muſt ſurrender not only Valenciennes, Condè, and Queſnoy; but our conqueſts at Newfoundland and in the Eaſt and Weſt Indies; and having thus abandoned all means of indemnity, we are to rely upon the good will of the Convention for ſuch ſecurity as they may vouchſafe to grant us.

But this humiliating and dangerous conceſſion is far ſhort of the extent of the indignity and hazard to which we muſt ſubject ourſelves even in the preliminary ſteps towards a Treaty of Peace in the preſent moment.

It has been ſuppoſod by ſome perſons, that in the month of April the obnoxious decree of the 19th of November 1792 was repealed; and arguments have been drawn from that circumſtance to prove that the Jacobin Faction have wholly abandoned their ſyſtem of ambition and of interference in the internal affairs of other countries. But the fact is, that the decree of the 19th of November 1792 has never been formally repealed. On the 13th of April 1793, a period in which it may naturally be ſuppoſed that the failure of their deſigns againſt Holland, and the expulſion of their army from the Netherlands had depreſſed the ſpirits of the Convention, a decree was propoſed and paſſed at the ſuggeſtion of Robeſpierre and Danton, for the expreſs purpoſe of throwing difficulties in the way of any negociation with the belligerent powers.

In

In introducing this decree, Danton uſes the following expreſſions:

" The principle of my motion is, that the pe-
" nalties of death ſhall be inflicted on any man
" who ſhall propoſe to the Republic to treat with
" an enemy, who has not as a preliminary recog-
" nized the ſovereignty of the people; in a mo-
" ment of enthuſiaſm, we made a grant of uni-
" verſal fraternity, by which we ſeem to be bound
" to ſuccour any patriot who may chuſe to make a
" revolution in China; but our firſt care ought to
" be the foundation of the power of France; when
" the Republic ſhall be ſecurely eſtabliſhed, our
" energy and our new lights will attract every
" people on earth; let us therefore declare, that
" we will not interfere in the affairs of other States,
" but let us alſo determine to condemn to death
" any perſon, who ſhall propoſe a negociation,
" which has not for its baſis the principles of our
" liberty."

After this ſpeech a decree was paſſed, in the firſt article of which the Convention declares, " that " it will not interfere in the internal government " of other powers." The next article enacts the penalties of death againſt " whoever ſhall propoſe " to negociate or treat with any power at war with " the Republic, unleſs ſuch power ſhall have pre-
" viouſly made a ſolemn recognition of the inde-
" pendence of the French nation, and of the ſo-
" vereignty, indiviſibility, and unity of the Re-
" public founded upon liberty and equality." I paſs over the obſervations which might be made upon that part of this decree which requires the previous and unconditional acknowledgment of a new power in Europe, as the preliminary to a negociation for peace. But it is neceſſary to underſtand diſtinctly what is meant by the acknowledgment

ledgment of the " unity and indiviſibility of the " Republic." This expreſſion is clearly explained by ſubſequent circumſtances.

On the 25th of Auguſt, a report is made by Herault Sechelles, in the name of the Committee of Public Welfare to the following effect: " The " people of Savoy are apprehenſive that France is " diſpoſed to abandon that department united to " the Republic by the ties of liberty. It is eſſen- " tial to counteract a rumour ſo fatal to the inte- " reſts of Savoy, and ſo injurious to the honour " of France. On the 13th of April you paſſed a " decree, by which you entered into a formal en- " gagement with the people of the re-united " countries, that you would never conſent to aban- " don them. You are bound by the laws of na- " ture, which have traced the limits of the French " Empire on the extreme verge of Savoy, you " are bound by every conſideration of intereſt and " of duty to remove the apprehenſions of the peo- " ple of Savoy, by repeating and confirming the " declaration which you made in the month of " April; a declaration, which placed under your " guardianſhip all the nations ſituated between the " confines of liberty and of ſlavery."

" In conſequence of this report, a decree was " paſſed, declaring, that the Convention conſiders " itſelf bound to afford equal protection to all parts " of the Republic one and indiviſible againſt all ty- " rants and their ſlaves." And accordingly Com- miſſioners were named to take proper meaſures for delivering Savoy from the incurſion of the Pied- monteſe troops. In the debate upon this decree, it is maintained " that Savoy is an integral part of " the Republic, and muſt be ſo conſidered, even if " it ſhould appear that the Conſtitution had been " accepted there only by a minority of the inha- " bitants."

" bitants." Barrere cloſes the debate, and ſays, " England has bound herſelf by a treaty with Ruſ-" ſia not to conclude peace with France, until " France ſhall have reſtored her conqueſts to their " original poſſeſſors, but Savoy is not a conqueſt, " nature and the wiſh of its inhabitants, have " united it to France." The whole of this debate, and the decree by which it is terminated, refer immediately to the decree of the 13th of April, and furniſh a clear expoſition of its true ſenſe and effect. It is evident, that notwithſtanding the oſtentatious renunciation of the principle of fraternity, France ſtill maintains her claim to all thoſe territories united to her dominion by the influence of corruption and of fear, ſo forcibly deſcribed in the confeſſions of Briſſot. This decree of counterfraternity is therefore in reality a freſh inſtance of her rooted principles of aggrandizement and ambition, and it is the more remarkable as it was paſſed in the hour of adverſity, in a period of domeſtic diviſion, and of foreign misfortune. If any doubt can remain reſpecting the true intent of this decree, it is entirely removed by the events which happened during the ſolemnity of the 10th of Auguſt 1793. On that day, the repreſentatives of " *eighty-ſix*" departments appeared at Paris, for the purpoſe of acknowledging the acceptance of the new Conſtitution, and the Preſident of the Convention, in a magnificent ſpeech pronounced at the feet of the altar of the country, declared, that the Conſtitution had been accepted by the " *eighty-ſix*" departments of France, a number which includes all the re-unions.

The firſt ſtep therefore towards the negociation of peace muſt neceſſarily be, to acknowledge the right of France to the Dutchy of Savoy, and to ſurrender the Netherlands and the principality of

Liege into her hands. Who is the Stateſman that ſhall adviſe us either to inſult our allies, by propoſing to them a conceſſion equally incompatible with their intereſt, and degrading to their dignity, or to renounce every obligation of public faith, and every ſentiment of honour, by commencing a ſeparate negociation for peace on ſuch terms without their previous concurrence? They who have frequently argued in this Houſe, that national honour is the moſt if not the only juſtifiable cauſe of war, will not (I preſume) contend that national diſgrace can be a ſolid foundation of Peace.

If it were poſſible to imagine that we could be diſpoſed to commit an act of ſuch flagrant perfidy, the ſenſe of our own immediate intereſt would be ſufficiently ſtrong to reſtrain us. We muſt indeed have forgotten the original cauſe of this war, the nature of that neceſſity which compelled us to embark in it, together with every circumſtance which has attended its progreſs, before we can conſent to confirm to France the command of the frontier of Italy, to reinſtate her armies in their former poſition on the frontier of Holland, to ſacrifice every advantage which we have gained, to repair every loſs which ſhe has ſuffered, to abandon all the reſources of the Netherlands to the immediate effects of her rapine, and to leave the wealth and power of Holland at her diſcretion. After having thus weakened our own barrier, and given new ſtrength to the enemy, after having ſubmitted to ſuch preliminaries, what new indignity might we not expect in the definitive treaty of peace? A further preliminary conceſſion required by this decree may ſerve to apprize us what might hereafter be exacted from this country as a ſeparate article, whenever France ſhould ſhould be in a ſituation to enforce ſuch a demand. It is required that we ſhould

acknowledge

acknowledge the ſovereignty of the Republic founded upon liberty and equality. To repeat the words of Danton, "the principles of French liberty are to "form the baſis of the negociation." We muſt therefore ſanction and ratify by a formal act of recognition all thoſe pernicious doctrines from which the calamities of France have flowed, we muſt abjure the fundamental maxims of our own limited monarchy, we muſt renounce the elementary principles of every branch of the Britiſh Conſtitution, and all this, in order to put ourſelves into a ſituation, in which the National Convention will deign to admit us to treat for peace. If it ſhould be argued that the Conſtitution and the law of France do indeed preſent all theſe obſtacles to the negociation of peace, but that the Conſtitution and the law may be diſregarded in this inſtance, as they have been in others, by the ruling faction; I anſwer, firſt, that no man in France can even propoſe an infraction of this law, without immediately incurring the penalties of death. Secondly, if it were probable that any exiſting power in France could have the boldneſs to brave this danger, and the influence to obtain permiſſion for Great-Britain to open a negociation on leſs diſgraceful terms, the whole tranſaction would on the firſt favourable occaſion be imputed as a crime to thoſe who had conducted it, the ſtipulations of a treaty commenced in open defiance of the law would be eaſily annulled, and we ſhould diſcover too late our fatal error in having relaxed our efforts preciſely at the moſt critical period of the war, for the proſpect of negociating with a Government utterly unable to fulfil its engagements.

But after ſome attention to the ſubject, I cannot diſcover any ſuch ſymptoms of a pacific diſpoſition in the Jacobin faction, as to juſtify a rational hope,

that they would incur the ſlighteſt riſk for the ſake of giving peace to Europe, and leaſt of all, for the ſake of giving a ſeparate peace to England. I have already had occaſion to make ſome alluſion to the general character of their ſyſtem of foreign politics. They were the moſt zealous promoters of the famous decree of fraternity; a decree which was paſſed by acclamation and with an exceſs of frantic enthuſiaſm occaſioned in a great meaſure by their violence. Danton himſelf moved the re-union of the Netherlands, and upon that occaſion firſt broached the extravagant doctrine, that the limits of France were marked by nature in four points, the Ocean, the Rhine, the Alps, and the Pyrenees, and that peace muſt never be made until the dominion of France has reached theſe four natural boundaries. Danton was afterwards one of the Commiſſioners who fraternized with the Flemiſh people by ſeizing their wealth, by arreſting their perſons, by ſubverting their laws, and by profaning their religion. Cambon moved the re-union of Nice, and was the author of the fraudulent decree of the 15th of December 1792, by which the property of all the reunited nations was placed under the "ſafeguard and protection" of the French Republic, and converted accordingly to the uſe of the French treaſury, and by which, war was declared againſt every people who ſhould dare to preſerve their loyalty to their prince, or to tolerate any diſtinction of ranks and orders of ſociety. Robeſpierre was loud in his complaints againſt Dumourier for not having more rigorouſly executed this very decree, and for not having invaded Holland immediately upon the firſt conqueſt of the Netherlands in the month of December 1792. Barrere was that preſident of the Convention, who in the true ſpirit of fraternity received the ambaſſadors of

ſedition

ſedition and treaſon from this country, and joined with them in a fervent prayer for the ſubverſion of the Britiſh Conſtitution. His principles were known to be ſo ardent, that at the moment of the declaration of war he was appointed together with Thomas Paine to draw up an addreſs to the people of England for the purpoſe of alienating their affections from their lawful ſovereign and from the conſtitution of Parliament. The dangerous ſpirit which unqueſtionably prevailed among the Jacobin faction at the breaking out of the war, has not been mitigated by the courſe of ſubſequent events. It breaks forth in various ſhapes, according to the difference of occaſions, tempers, and ſituations. The Jacobin ſociety, the parent of the exiſting Government in France, and the fountain head of all political doctrines in that country, ſo lately as the month of October laſt printed and circulated through all the affiliated ſocieties of anarchy, and through all the regular official channels provided for ſuch purpoſes a very curious treatiſe entitled " Revolutio-
" nary Diplomatics, by Anacharſis Clootz Orator
" of the human race." In this work the Orator of the Human Race addreſſes himſelf to the Sans Culottes of Holland, and exhorts them to take conſolation under their preſent oppreſſions. He ſays,
" the principal Members of the National Conven-
" tion and of the popular ſocieties are ſtill convin-
" ced of the importance of uniting the mouths of
" the Rhine with the mouths of the Rhone, and
" of reſtoring to France the natural limits of anci-
" ent Gaul. The geographical poſition of France
" is not changed ſince laſt year; France cannot be
" confined within the factitious limits fixed by the
" folly of her kings; public opinion has already
" condemned thoſe, who would patch up a peace
" by ſacrificing to the Cabinet of St. James's the
" intereſts

" intereſts of Savoy, Nice, Liege, and the Nether-
" lands. The extenſion of the territory of France
" is equally eſſential to her own domeſtic happi-
" neſs, and to the eſtabliſhment of the rights of
" man in every part of the world." Towards the concluſion of this new eſſay on the law of nations, it is announced, " that the day is approaching " when the people of England ſhall riſe, and de-
" mand the convocation of an aſſembly, where
" there ſhall be no queſtion either of My Lords or
" Gentlemen." It is true that Mr. Clootz, having been detected in the crime of enjoying a conſidera-ble property, has been lately expelled from the Ja-cobin Club; but it does not appear that theſe en-larged doctrines of univerſal fraternity, inculcated on the minds of the people of France by order of the Jacobins, have been ſince withdrawn from ge-neral circulation; and we have no more reaſon to conclude from the expulſion of Mr. Clootz, that his Revolutionary diplomatics have been involved in the fate of their author, than that the Conven-tion in expelling Thomas Paine intended to re-nounce the rights of man. Robeſpierre, in terms ſomewhat more meaſured, has expreſſed ſentiments of the ſame miſchievous tendency in his report of the 17th of November 1793 upon the political ſitu-ation of the Republic, a report made in the name of the Committee of Public Welfare, which had before that time been inveſted with the whole pow-ers of Government.

" The Briſſotins while they left our ſoldiers
" without arms, our fortreſſes without proviſions,
" and our armies in the hands of traitors, urged
" us to go and plant the ſtandard of the Republic
" on the extremities of the world; with the ſtroke
" of a pen they overturned all thrones, and added
" Europe to the French empire. The ſincere

" friends

" friends of the Republic had a different plan: be-
" fore they attempted to break the chains of the
" univerſe, they wiſhed to ſecure the liberty of
" their own country; before they carried war into
" the countries of foreign deſpots, they wiſhed to
" direct it againſt the tyrant who betrayed them
" at home; convinced that a King was but a bad
" guide to conduct a people to the conqueſt of
" univerſal liberty."

You may underſtand from this paſſage, with what view Robeſpierre and his party urged the murder of their unfortunate ſovereign; it was, (according to the avowal of the Committee of Public Welfare in this report) for the purpoſe of eſtabliſhing a Government, under which the people of France might be more readily conducted to the *conqueſt of univerſal liberty;* a phraſe which now requires no comment. On the 5th of December Robeſpierre reported his celebrated anſwer to the manifeſtoes of all Kings. In this extraordinary compoſition is contained a more ſcandalous libel againſt every Prince in Europe, and a more virulent invective againſt monarchy itſelf, than any which has yet appeared, even in France. He calls all Kings " ſlaves in a ſtate of inſurrection againſt the ſove-
" reignty of the people." He ſays, " that Royal-
" ty is the maſterpiece of human corruption." He maintains (as I have already ſtated) " that regicide
" is an act of the pureſt piety; but he declares,
" that he has no further intention, than to enligh-
" ten the minds of mankind with regard to the
" crimes of their reſpective Governments." He concludes with an argument to prove that " the
" Britiſh Government muſt be a deſpotiſm, be-
" cauſe there is an oppoſition in Parliament; and
" he calls the Britiſh people, a vile and inſolent
" race,

" race, which has the preſumption to talk of the " rights of freedom, and of the duties of morality."

Theſe expreſſions bring before your view not only the general hoſtility profeſſed by the Jacobins againſt all regular Government, but their particular animoſity againſt the united people of theſe happy kingdoms, and againſt the whole frame of the Britiſh Conſtitution. Similar expreſſions of fixed and inveterate hatred are to be found in every important act of the Government; I will quote a few inſtances, all taken from the reports made by different perſons to the Convention, in the name of the Committee of Public Welfare.

On the 16th of October 1793 Saint Juſt propoſes a decree for the arreſt of all Engliſhmen remaining in France, and for the ſeizure of their property: he concludes his report with theſe words, " we " will give our friendly aſſiſtance to the people of " England, in order to enable them to rid themſelves of Kings."

Upon the evacuation of Toulon, Barrere ſays, in a triumphant tone, " the day is not diſtant, " when the people of England ſhall recollect that " they were once Republicans, and that it was ar " uſurpation which reduced them again to the ca" lamitous condition of ſubjects living under mo" narchy."

The ſame perſon on the 21ſt of September 1793, propoſing an act of navigation for the expreſs purpoſe of deſtroying the commerce and naval power of Great Britain, uſes theſe words; " Carthage " was the torment of Italy, Carthage was deſtroy" ed by Rome; London is the torment of Europe; " London is an ulcer which waſtes the ſtrength of " the Continent: London is a political excreſcence " which liberty is bound to deſtroy; may England " be ruined! May England be annihilated! Such " ought

" ought to be the concluding article of every *Re-*
" *volutionary* decree of the National Convention
" of France!"

I cannot diſpute the wiſdom and policy of this ſentiment; I muſt agree with Barrere, that the ruin and annihilation of England would be, in the technical ſenſe of the phraſe, a *Revolutionary* meaſure.—Every motive of intereſt or of paſſion, which could engage the Jacobin faction to diſturb the peace of any independent ſtate, muſt operate with redoubled force againſt Great Britain: Enemies not to the tyranny but to the order of abſolute Monarchy, enemies to the principle of order itſelf, their animoſity muſt be moſt peculiarly exaſperated againſt a frame of Government, in which that principle appears in its moſt perfect and beautiful form. This is ſo conſiſtent with the genuine character of anarchy, that the very ſame ſentiment is attributed by Milton to the " old anarch" Chaos himſelf. He is introduced complaining to his gueſt Satan of the various encroachments which have been made upon the ancient empire of confuſion and diſcord; he firſt complains even of the order eſtabliſhed in the infernal regions, but he is incenſed to the utmoſt height of indignation againſt the beautiful order of the creation. Since the completion of that work he declares, that he is compelled to keep perpetual watch upon his frontier, endeavouring if he can to preſerve the remnants of his anarchy from invaſion. When he is informed that Satan is upon his paſſage to Paradiſe in the character of a miſſionary from the rebellious ſpirits for the expreſs purpoſe of diſturbing the peace of mankind; he receives him with great cordiality, directs his courſe, and wiſhes him a proſperous voyage; Satan repays this hoſpitality by a promiſe that he

will uſe his utmoſt efforts to diſorganiſe the world, he ſays,

" Direct my courſe;
" Directed, no mean recompenſe it brings
" To your behoof, if I that region loſt,
" All uſurpation thence expelled, reduce
" To her original darkneſs, and your ſway,
" (Which is my preſent journey) and once more
" Erect the ſtandard there of ancient night;
" Yours be th' advantage all, mine the revenge."

All the ſcenes of fraternity which have been acted by the modern Anarchs; all their libellous ſpeeches and virulent reports ſeem to have been modelled from this precedent. Their general view has uniformly been, and ſtill continues to be the ſubverſion of all regular Government of whatever deſcription, but their primary object is, and muſt be to aboliſh every trace and veſtige of a Government, which furniſhes a practical leſſon to mankind, that a juſt gradation of ranks and orders of ſociety connected with the principles of a limited monarchy affords the beſt protection for the liberty and happineſs of individuals, as well as the moſt permanent baſis of national union and political ſtrength.

Such being the paſſions and intereſts of the Revolutionary Government, and ſuch being the nature of the ſyſtem eſtabliſhed under their influence, while that ſyſtem ſhall exiſt either under their Adminiſtration, or, without changing its character, ſhall paſs into the hands of any other faction, we cannot attempt even the preliminary ſteps towards a negociation for peace, without relinquiſhing all hope of indemnity for the hazard and expence of the war, and without renouncing all proſpect of ſecurity againſt the deſigns of France. We muſt augment

augment her reſources, we muſt aggrandize her dominion, we muſt recognize and confirm her principles of Government, we muſt abandon our allies to her mercy, we muſt let her looſe to prey at diſcretion upon the whole continent of Europe; and after having by this unconditional grant furniſhed her with the moſt formidable means of univerſal aggreſſion, we are to confide in the words of a Treaty for our ſole protection againſt the common danger; then might be applied to our weakneſs and infatuation the words of a ſacred writer, once before applied to a nation under the influence of a ſimilar deluſion.—

" Ye have ſaid, we have made a Covenant with " Death, and with the Grave are we at agreement; " when the overflowing plague ſhall paſs through, " it ſhall not come unto Us.

" But your Covenant with Death ſhall be diſan- " nulled, and your agreement with the Grave " ſhall not ſtand, when the overflowing plague " ſhall paſs through, then Ye ſhall be trodden " down by it."—And trodden down we ſhall be, if we ſhrink from our duty on this day: for how can we indulge the viſionary hope, that in the general plunder of property, in the deſtruction of order and government, in the wreck of civil ſociety, the Britiſh empire alone ſhall be ſpared? How can we delude ourſelves with the vain imagination that France in the plenitude of her power and in the full career of her ſucceſs will reſpect that nation alone, which is the avowed and peculiar object of her hatred, which offers the ſtrongeſt temptation to her inſatiable avarice, and oppoſes the moſt effectual obſtacle to her licentious ambition?

Thus, Sir, I have endeavoured to prove, that the original juſtice and neceſſity of this war have

been ſtrongly confirmed by ſubſequent events; that the general reſult of the laſt campaign both upon our own ſituation and upon that of the enemy affords a reaſonable expectation of ultimate ſucceſs; and that not only the characters, the intereſts, and the diſpoſitions of thoſe who now exerciſe the powers of Government in France, but the very nature of that ſyſtem which they have eſtabliſhed render a treaty of peace upon ſafe or honouraable terms impracticable in the preſent moment, and conſequently require a vigorous and unremitting proſecution of the war.

Hitherto, I have addreſſed my arguments to the whole Houſe; in what I ſhall now urge, I muſt declare, that I do not mean to addreſs myſelf to thoſe few among us who did not ſhare the common ſentiment of the Houſe, and of the Public in that period of general alarm, which immediately preceded this war. But I appeal to thoſe, who previous to the commencement of the war felt in common with the great body of the people a well-grounded apprehenſion for the ſafety of our happy Conſtitution, and the general intereſt of civil ſociety; Do they now feel the ſame degree of anxiety? Even in the midſt of hoſtilities, in the very heat of the conteſt, and after a campaign which, although greatly ſucceſsful in its general reſult, has neither been exempt from difficulty, nor from the ordinary viciſſitudes of a ſtate of war, do they not now feel in their own breaſts, and perceive in the public mind ſuch a degree of confidence in the ſecurity of all that can be dear and valuable to Britiſh ſubjects, as they would have gladly purchaſed before the war, even by ſurrendering a part of thoſe intereſts, the whole of which was menaced in that gloomy period of general conſternation?

What

What change of circumſtances, what happy combination of events has calmed the anxiety, and revived the depreſſed ſpirits of the nation?

Is it the decree of counter fraternity declaring, that France will no longer interfere in the internal affairs of independent ſtates, but reſerving to her —the ſovereignty of all thoſe countries which were overrun by her arms in the firſt career of her inordinate ambition? Is it the reply of Robeſpierre to the manifeſtoes of all the Princes of Europe, in which he pronounces Kings to be the maſterpiece of human corruption, in which he libels every monarch in Europe, but proteſts that France has no intention to diſturb monarchy, if the ſubjects of Kings are ſtill weak enough to ſubmit to ſuch an inſtitution? Is it the murder of Briſſot and his aſſociates? Is it the diſgrace and impriſonment of Anacharſis Clootz the author of the Revolutionary Diplomatics, or of Thomas Paine the author of the Rights of Man? Is it any profeſſion, aſſurance, or act of the Revolutionary Government of France? —You all know it is not—The confidence of a wiſe people could never be reſted on ſuch weak and unſubſtantial foundations. The real cauſe of our preſent ſenſe of ſecurity is to be found in our own exertions combined with thoſe of our allies. By thoſe exertions we were enabled to withſtand and repel the firſt aſſault of the arms and principles of France; and the continuance of the ſame effort now forms our only barrier againſt the return of the ſame danger. Who then ſhall venture to perſuade you to caſt away the defence which has afforded you protection againſt all the objects of your former apprehenſion, to ſubvert the foundations of your preſent confidence, and to reſort for your future ſafety to the inconſiſtent decrees, to the contradictory declarations, and to the vague

aſſurances

aſſurances of a guilty, deſperate, and diſtracted faction, which offers no poſſible ground of ſecurity either in the principles of its policy, or in the ſtability of its power?—All the circumſtances of your ſituation are now before you.—You are now to make your option;—you are now to decide, whether it beſt becomes the dignity, the wiſdom, and the ſpirit of a great nation to rely for her exiſtence on the arbitrary will of a reſtleſs and implacable enemy, or on her own ſword: you are now to decide, whether you will entruſt to the valour and ſkill of Britiſh fleets and Britiſh armies, to the approved faith and united ſtrength of your numerous and powerful allies the defence of the limited monarchy of theſe realms, of the Conſtitution of Parliament, of all the eſtabliſhed ranks and orders of ſociety among us, of the ſacred rights of property, and of the whole frame of our laws, our liberty and our religion; or whether you will deliver over the guardianſhip of all theſe bleſſings—to the juſtice of Cambon, the plunderer of the Netherlands, who to ſuſtain the baſeleſs fabric of his depreciated aſſignats, defrauds whole nations of their rights of property, and mortgages the aggregate wealth of Europe;—to the moderation of Danton, who firſt promulgated that unknown law of nature which ordains, that the Alps, the Pyrenees, the Ocean, and the Rhine ſhould be the only boundaries of the French dominion;—to the religion of Robeſpierre, whoſe practice of piety is the murder of his own ſovereign, who exhorts all mankind to embrace the ſame faith, and to aſſaſſinate their kings for the honour of God;—to the friendſhip of Barrere,—who avows in the face of all Europe, that the fundamental article of the Revolutionary Government of France is the ruin and annihilation of the Britiſh empire;—or finally,

to

to whatever may be the accidental caprice of any New Band of Malefactors, who, in the laſt convulſions of their exhauſted country, may be deſtined to drag the preſent tyrants to their own ſcaffolds, to ſeize their lawleſs power, to emulate the depravity of their example, and to rival the enormity of their crimes.

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